

# Sūrah Al-Naḥl

(The Honey Bee)

Sūrah al-Naḥl is Makkī and it has 128 verses and 16 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

## Verses 1 - 2

آتَىٰ أَمْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ ۖ سُبْحَنَهُ ۖ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١﴾ يُنَزِّلُ  
الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا  
إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٢﴾

The command of Allah is bound to come. So, do not ask for it to come sooner. Pure is He, and much higher than what they ascribe to Him as partners. [1]

He sends down the angels at His behest with the spirit, (that is, the revelation), upon whom He wills from among His servants: 'Warn people that there is no god but Me. So, fear Me.' [2]

## The Name of the Sūrah

This Sūrah has been called Al-Naḥl, that is, the honey bee because it mentions it as a unique Divine marvel. Another name for this Sūrah is Sūrah Al-Ni'am. (Qurṭubī) The word Ni'am is the plural of Ni'mah (blessing) because the great blessings of Allah Ta'ālā have been particularly mentioned in this Sūrah.

## Commentary

The Sūrah begins without any particular introduction with a direct,

stern and awesome note of warning. The reason behind it was the saying of the polytheists that Muḥammad (al-Muṣṭafā صلى الله عليه وسلم) keeps warning them of the day of Qiyāmah and the punishment of Allah and telling them that Allah Ta'ālā has promised victory for him and punishment for his opponents. All this, they challenged, they do not see coming upon them. In reply, it was said: **أَتَى أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ** (The command of Allah is bound to come. So, do not ask for it to come sooner - 1).

Here, the expression: **أَمْرُ اللَّهِ** (*amrullāh* : the command of Allah) means the promise Allah has made to His Rasūl - that his enemies will be made to surrender, and that Muslims will be blessed with victory and honour. In this verse, it is in a distinctly awesome tone that Allah Ta'ālā has said: **أَتَى أَمْرُ اللَّهِ** (*atā amrullāh* : translated here as 'the command of Allah is bound to come'). Literally (the nuance of the original expression remaining untranslatable), the sense is that issued is the command of Allah, that is, it is bound to come which you will soon see.

Some commentators say that 'the command of Allah' here means the day of Qiyāmah. The sense of its being 'bound to come' is that it is going to come soon. And if we were to look at it in the frame of the life of the entire world itself, its being close, or its actual coming does not remain much distant. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

As for the second sentence in the first verse where it is said that Allah Ta'ālā is free of Shirk (the ascribing of partners to Him), it means that the act of these people who are belying the promise of Allah Ta'ālā is itself an act of Kufr (infidelity) and Shirk. Allah Ta'ālā is absolutely free from it. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

The essential message of the first verse is to call people to believe in the Oneness of Allah (*Tauḥīd*) through a stern warning. The second verse carries an affirmation of *Tauḥīd* through a reported proof, the substance of which is that every Rasūl or messenger of Allah, from Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام to the Last of the Prophets ﷺ, who has come in different parts of the world at different times, has but preached this belief in the Oneness of Allah - though, none of them knew anything about the life and work of each other because of obvious causes. Just imagine if at least one hundred and twenty thousand blessed wise men who are born in different ages, countries and regions, and believe in and

adhere to one single principle, then, one is naturally compelled to accept that their saying so cannot be false. In order to have faith, this single proof is sufficient.

The word: روح (*rūḥ*: spirit) as used in this verse, according to Sayyidnā ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, means Waḥy (revelation); and according to some commentators, it means Hidāyah (guidance). (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ) After having presented the reported proof of Tauḥīd in the second verse, the same belief has been proved rationally by turning the focus on the blessings of Allah Ta‘ālā as it follows next in verses 3-8.

### Verses 3 - 8

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣﴾  
 الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٤﴾ وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا ۚ لَكُمْ  
 فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ  
 تُرْيَحُونَهَا وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَهَا ﴿٦﴾ وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا  
 بِلَغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْخَيْلَ  
 وَالْبُغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً ۚ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

He created the heavens and the earth in the proper way. He is much higher than what they ascribe to Him as partners. [3] He created man from a drop, and soon he turned into a quarrelsome person expressing himself openly. [4] As for the cattle, He created them, having warmth for you, and other benefits; and of them you eat. [5] And for you there is beauty in them when you drive them (home) in the evening and take them out to graze. [6] And they carry your loads to a city where you were not able to reach without putting yourself into hardship. Surely, your Lord is Very Kind, Very Merciful. [7] And (He created) horses, mules and donkeys so that you may ride on them and they may look good. And He creates what you do not know (yet). [8]

### Lexical Explanation

The word: *خَصُومٌ* (*khaṣīm*) in verse 4 has been derived from: *خَصُومَةٌ* (*khu-ṣūmah*) and means a quarrelsome person. Al-An'ām is the plural of *na'am*, which are cattles such as the camel, goat and cow. (Al-Mufradat of Raghīb al-Isfahānī)

The word: *دِفْءٌ* (*difun*) in verse 5 denotes what provides warmth, that is, wool which is used to make warm clothings. The word: *تُرِيحُونَ* (*turiḥūn*) in verse 6 is a derivation from *rawāḥ*, and: *تَسْرَحُونَ* (*tasraḥūn*) in the same verse, from *sarah*. When the cattle are sent to graze, it is called *sarah*, and when they return home, it is called *rawāḥ*. The expression: *شِقِّقِ الْأَنْفُسُ* (*shiqqil-anfus*) in verse 7 - 8 means personal hardship.

### Commentary

The verses affirm the Oneness of Allah through the great signs of the creation of the universe. The first such creation pointed to is the creation of the heavens and the earth. Then comes the creation of human beings whom Allah Ta'ālā has made the ones who are served by the whole universe. How did man originate? The text says that he was created from an insignificant drop. What happened then was: *فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ* (and soon he turned into a quarrelsome person expressing himself openly). In other words, when the elementally weak man was endowed with strength and speech, he turned into a critic of the Creator Himself disputing His Being and Attributes publicly.

After human beings, mentioned there was the creation of things which were made specially for their benefit. Since the first addressees of the Qur'ān were Arabs and their economic life depended on domestic cattle like camels, cows and goats, therefore, these were taken up first: *وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا* (As for the cattle, He created them - 5).

Then, out of the benefits received by human beings from the cattle, two were particularly mentioned. (1) *لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ* (having warmth for you), that is, they use wool from them to make clothings which keep them warm during winters.

(2) The second benefit was mentioned in: *وَمِنْهَا تَكُلُونَ* (and of them you eat), that is, they can slaughter these animals and eat from their meat; and, when alive, they procure milk from them which is fine food indeed. Included here are butter, yogurt, butter-oil and everything else which

fall under dairy products.

For the rest of benefits derived from them, only one word: مَنَافِعُ (*manāfi'* : other benefits) was considered sufficient. It signifies that there are countless benefits tied to the meat, skin, bone and hair of animals. It is within the framework of this brevity, even ambiguity, that a hint has been given towards all modern innovations in the processing and use of food, dress, medicine and domestic articles, innovations which have been made to date, or will be made right through the Last Day.

After that, identified there is yet another benefit of these cattle - though, in terms of the contemporary Arab taste of the time - when it was said that these cattle make things look good for them particularly when they return home from their grazing grounds in the evening, or when they are sent out to graze in the mornings. The reason is that these cattle at that time become silent spokesmen of the strength and pride of their owners.

Finally, mention has been made of another important benefit which comes from these animals. They carry heavy loads to far out places, places which could not be reached 'without putting yourselves into hardship.' Out of the animals, camels and oxen have been particularly harnessed into this service of man at a large scale. Even during our day of trains, trucks and cargo planes, human beings cannot universally claim to have become free of their need. There are places in the world where none of our modern means of transportation can work. Consequently, one is compelled to borrow their services.

Since mention was made of '*an'ām*' that is, camels and oxen, it was appropriate that mention be made of quadrupeds which have been created exclusively for purposes of draft and ride. One does not benefit by their milk or meat because, according to religious law, they are the cause of moral diseases, hence prohibited. It was said: وَالْحَيَلُ وَالْبِغَالُ وَالْحَمِيرُ لَتَرْكَبُوهُنَّ وَزِينَةُ And (He created) horses, mules and donkeys so that you may ride on them (which includes loading as a corollary) and (they were also created so that) they may look good - 8.' The word: زِينَةُ (*zīnah*) used here means the same favourable quality of life which, as commonly recognized, is the pleasing possession of these animals by their owners.

### Railroads, Automobiles and Aeroplanes in the Qur'ān!

In the last sentence of verse 8, after having mentioned three animals particularly used for riding, that is, horses, mules and donkeys, what was said about other kinds of rides appears in the future tense as follows:

وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

And He creates [or, will create] what you do not know (yet).

Thus, under this very statement, included there are all newly invented transport facilities which did not exist in the past, nor was there any precise idea of what they shall be. For instance, there are railroads, automobiles and aeroplanes. Apart from these means of transport which have been invented to date, included here are all other ways and means which will be invented and used in the future. The reason is that the creation of all these things is really nothing but the act of the Absolute Creator. In it, the role of science, whether classical or modern, is no more than utilizing the God-given intelligence and understanding when handling metallic or other components also created by the same Power, go through experimentations, find appropriate combinations and construct working components. Then, it can go and generate energy from the Divinely endowed treasures of air, water, heat etc. No science, classical or modern, even both combined, can create iron and copper, or lighter metals, nor can it create wood, nor air, nor water. None of these come under its power or control. Science does no more than learn the art of using what has been created by Divine power. All inventions of the world are simply the detail of this usage. Therefore, with a little deliberation, one is left with no choice but to accept and declare that all our new inventions (for which we seem to be so fond of congratulating our own selves!) are invariably the creation of the Absolute Creator.

In view of its importance, let us keep in mind that the text has used the past tense: خَلَقَ (*khalaqa* : He created) while mentioning the creation of things earlier. However, after the mention of animals commonly used for riding, the tense used: يَخْلُقُ (*yakhluqu* : He will create, or creates) is that of future. This change clearly indicates that the word so used is for means of transport and other things which have not yet come into existence. But, Allah Ta'ālā has it in His Knowledge as to what modes of travel and other things are to be created in times to come. All this was

said in this small sentence here.

It was also possible that Allah Ta'ālā would have mentioned all new inventions to come into being in the future by name. But, the mention of words signifying railroads, automobiles and aeroplanes would have brought no benefit except that it would have left people bewildered in mental confusion - because the very conceptualization of such things at that time was not easy, nor were such words in use for such things anywhere so that people could make some sense out of them.

My respected father, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn رحمه الله تعالى said: Our teacher, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb Nānautawī رحمه الله تعالى, the great teacher of teachers, used to say: 'The rail (railway, railroad) has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān.' For proof, he quoted this verse. Cars, though invented, were not common in those days, while the aeroplanes were not invented yet. Therefore, he found it sufficient to mention the 'rail.'

### Rulings:

1. The Qur'ān first mentioned *al-an'ām*, that is, the camel, cow and goat. Then, out of their benefits, one such benefit was declared to be the eating of their meat. Then, as separate from it, it was said: *وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ* (and horses, mules and donkeys). When pointing out to their benefits, definite mention was made of their use for riding, and that they may look good by having them. But, the eating of their meat has not been mentioned here. This provides the proof that the meat from horse, mule and donkey is not Ḥalāl. As for the meat from mule and donkey is concerned, the majority of Fuqahā' (Muslim jurists) agree upon its meat being Ḥarām - and in a Ḥadīth on the subject, its unlawfulness has been clearly stated. But, in the case of horse meat, there are two conflicting narrations of Ḥadīth. One of them puts it as Ḥalāl, while the other, as Ḥarām. Therefore, sayings of the Fuqahā' of the Muslim community became divided on this religious issue. Some declared it to be Ḥalāl while others called it Ḥarām. It was because of these conflicting arguments that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, did not call horse meat Ḥarām like the meat of a donkey or mule, but he did call it Makūrh (reprehensible). (Aḥkām al-Qur'ān by Al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

2. From verse 6 and 8, it appears that beauty and embellishment are

allowed - though, pride and arrogance are Ḥarām (prohibited). The difference is that the outcome of beauty and embellishment is that it makes one happy with himself, or that it shows the blessing of Allah openly. When this happens, neither does one nurse the idea in his heart that he is deserving of this blessing, nor does he take others to be low and contemptible. Instead, such a person keeps the fact, that all good things of life given to him are but the gift and blessing of Allah Ta'ālā, foremost in his mind. Contrary to this is pride and arrogance under which one takes himself to be deserving of this blessing while taking others to be low. That is Ḥarām (forbidden). (Bayān al-Qur'an)

### Verse 9

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾

**And undertaken by Allah is (to show) the right path while there are some (paths) which swerve; and had He so willed, He would have led you all to the right path. [9]**

### Commentary

Presented in the previous verses was a description of the great blessings of Allah Ta'ālā as rational proof of His Oneness. This description of Divine blessings continues later on as well.

In between these two, the present verse (9) has been introduced parenthetically for the purpose of warning that Allah Ta'ālā, pursuant to His standing promise, has taken it upon Himself that He makes the straight path which takes its follower to Allah Ta'ālā clear and explicit. Therefore, the objective of the presentation of Divine blessings is to demonstrate proofs of the Being and Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā.

But, counter to this, people have preferred to go by other crooked ways. It is unfortunate that, despite having clear signs and open proofs, they do not benefit by them. Instead, go on straying endlessly.

After that it was said that Allah Ta'ālā, if He had so willed, would have made all of them to (compulsively) be on the right path. Had He done so, it was within His power. But, wisdom and expedient considerations required that there be no compulsion. Let the two paths be before everyone. Whoever elects to take whichever path should be free to take



it. Everyone goes his or her way. The Straight Path (*al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*) will take people to Allah Taʿālā and Jannah (Paradise). As for other crooked ways, they will take people to Jahannam (Hell). Human beings have been given the power to choose whichever path they wish to take.

### Verses 10 - 16

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُبْتِغِي لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۚ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَا ذَرَأْنَاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَنَا كُلُّوْا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا ۚ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَالْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَعَلَّمَتْ ۖ وَالنَّجْمَ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

**He is the One who sent down water from the heavens from which you have your drink and from which (you grow) plants, on which you pasture cattle. [10] He causes thereof to grow for you the crops, and olives, and date-palms, and grape-vines, and of all the fruits. Surely, in that, there is a sign for a people who ponder. [11]**

**And He has subjugated for you the day and the night and the sun and the moon. And the stars (too) are subservient by His command. Surely, in that, there are signs for a people who understand. [12]**

**And (He subjugated) for you whatever He created on the earth having varied colours. Surely, in that, there is a sign for a people who accept advice. [13]**

And He is the One who has subjugated the sea so that you may eat fresh meat therefrom, and may take out from it ornaments you wear, and you see the boats cleaving through it, and so that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be grateful. [14]

And He placed mountains on the earth, lest it should shake with you, and rivers and tracks, so that you may find the right way. [15] And (He created) signs. And through stars they find the right path. [16]

### Commentary

The word: شَجَرٌ (*shajar*) in verse 10: مِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ (from which [you grow] plants, on which you pasture cattle) is mostly applied to a tree which stands on a trunk. Sometimes, it is also applied, in an absolute sense, to everything which grows on land. Included therein are grass on stems or tendrils. This is the sense meant in this verse, because the pasturing of cattle has been mentioned immediately after which is mostly related to grass.

The last word: تُسِيمُونَ (*tusīmūn*) is a derivation from *isāmah* which means to leave cattle to graze freely in a pasture.

It will be noticed that all verses cited above point out to Divine blessings and mention the creation of the universe with unprecedented wisdom. In them, those who ponder find significant indicators and proofs which lead them to perceive the truth of Tauḥīd, the truth that Allah Ta'ālā is One. Therefore, while these blessings are being mentioned, they are tied up with a notice to pay attention, think, understand and accept advice. Consequently, at the end of verse 11, it was said: إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (Indeed, in that, there is a sign for a people who ponder). The reason is that the linkage of pastures, crops, trees and their flowers and fruits with the creativity and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā needs some reflection. If one ponders over a grain or pit, he will come to realize that simply putting it inside the land and watering it cannot automatically cause it to grow into a huge big tree with flowers of many colours opening up all over it. No tiller or farmer or land owner has made this happen. Their role in this process is nil. All this is linked with and tied to the creativity and wisdom of the Absolute Master.

After that, when came the description of the night and day, the sun,

the moon and the stars which have been made subservient by His command, it was said in the concluding sentence of verse 12: **إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ** (Indeed, in that, there are signs for a people who understand). Given here is the hint that these things are of course subservient to the command of Allah, an open fact which does not need a lot of thinking. Anyone having some reason in him would understand, because there was obviously some human input in the growth of vegetation and trees, but, in this case, there is none.

Before we move to the next verse, let us clarify the first sentence of verse 12: **سَخَّرَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ** (And He has subjugated for you the day and the night). Here, 'subjugating the day and the night' means that Allah made them subservient to His command in order that they can serve man, pursuant to which the night brings comfort to him and the day smooths out the avenues of his work. 'Subjugating them' never means that the day and the night start alternating under human command.

Then, in verse 13, after mentioning all other varied produce of the land, it was said: **إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ** (Surely, in that, there is a sign for a people who accept advice). The sense is that no deep thinking is needed here as well - because, the proof has been furnished openly. But, the condition is that one must look at it carefully and learn his lesson. Otherwise, one who has no sense or concern and who just pays no attention could hardly hope to benefit from it.

After the description of things created in the heavens and the earth, and the benefits human beings derive from them, the text now turns to the high seas wherein Divine wisdom has placed many more benefits for them. Verse 14 which begins with the words: **هُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَنَا كُلًّا** (And He is the One who has subjugated the sea so that you may eat) which points out to the excellent arrangement whereby they get their supply of sea food, fresh white meat from the fish.

By calling the fish, fresh meat, in the sentence which follows immediately, that is: **لِنَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا** (so that you may eat fresh meat therefrom - 14), a hint has also been placed within the statement that it is free of any condition of slaughtering necessary with other animals. That is, as if, meat made ready, without having to do so. This was the first benefit.

The second benefit is identified in the sentence appearing immedi-

ately next: *وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (and may take out from it ornaments you wear - 14), that is, divers would dive in it and take out what the text calls: *حِلْيَةً* (*hilyah*: translated as ornaments). The literal meaning of *hilyah* is *zinah*, that which beautifies, embellishes, adorns or ornaments. Thus, the reference here is to pearls and precious coral stones which are taken out of the sea. Women wear it as necklaces or earrings. Though these ornaments are worn by women, yet the Holy Qur'an has used the word in the masculine gender: *تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (*talbasūnaha*), that is, 'you wear.' What has been hinted here is that the wearing of ornaments by women is, in reality, in the interest of men. That woman looks good is, in reality, the right of man. He can even compel his wife to wear dress and ornaments which look good on her. Other than that, men too can use precious stones on their rings.

The third benefit of the sea appears in: *وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلَيَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ* (And you see the boats cleaving through it and so that you may seek His bounty - 14). The word: *فُلْكَ* (*fulk*) means boat, and: *مَوَاجِرَ* (*mawākhir*) is the plural of *مَاجِرَهُ* : *mākhirah*. *Makhr* (مَخْرُ) means to cleave or plough through the water. The reference is to boats and ships which traverse the sea cleaving through the waves of the waters.

The sense of the verse (14) is that Allah Ta'ālā has made the sea one of the means of reaching distant countries. Thus, He has made it easy for human beings to travel by sea and bring in or send out their commercial goods. The text also declares it to be an excellent means of seeking the bounty of Allah, that is, their *rizq* or sustenance - because, trading through the sea routes is most economical and beneficial.

In Verse 16, it was said: *وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ* (And He placed mountains on the earth, lest it should shake with you). The word: *رَوَاسِيَ* (*rawāsiya*) is the plural of *رَاسِيَه* (*rāsiyah*) which denotes a huge mountain. The word: *تَمِيدَ* (*tamīda*) is a derivation from the verbal noun: *مَيْدَ* (*mayd*) which means to shake or swing or sway from side to side (due to loss of balance).

The sense of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā has not made the sphere of the Earth from components which are not solid and balanced, therefore, it is heavier on one side and lighter on some other. Its necessary outcome was that the Earth was to be taken as stationary, as commonly

held by early thinkers; or, taken to be orbitally moving, as determined by some early and most modern scientists. Under both these views, this phenomenon would have caused terristerial turbulence which is identified as shaking, swinging or swaying from side to side. To stop this turbulence and to provide a balance for the terristerial composition, Allah Ta'ālā placed on the Earth the weight of mountains so that it would not shake. As for its orbital movement like all planets which is the commonly held view from Pythagorus to modern scientists made more explicit through contemporary experiments, it is something which the Holy Qur'ān neither affirms nor rejects. In fact, this possible turbulence which has been stopped through the use of mountains should be more conducive to this orbital movement which is credited to the Earth like other planets. Allah knows best.

In the last verse (16), it was said: وَعَلَّمَتْهُمُ الْبَلَدَ وَالنَّجْمَ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ 'And (He created) signs. And through stars they find the right path.' Since trade-oriented travel was mentioned above, it was considered appropriate that conveniences which Allah Ta'ālā has provided in the heavens and the earth designed to help travellers cover distances and reach destinations be mentioned alongside. Therefore, it was said: وَعَلَّمَتْ (wa 'alāmāt), that is, 'We have set up many signs in the form of mountains, rivers, trees, homes and things like that in order to help people find their way on the earth.' It is obvious that, had the earth been flat, there was no way man would stray around in his effort to reach his destination.

As for the last statement in the verse: وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ that is, the way travellers know their bearing through territorial signs, quite similarly, they also find out their orientation through stars as well. The modality of the address here seems to hint that the initial purpose of the creation of the stars is, for that matter, something else - however, alongwith it, their additional benefit is that they help in the charting of one's course when travelling.

### Verses 17 - 23

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِنْ تَعْدُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصَوْهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا

تُعَلِّقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ ۚ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ لَا يَأْنِ أَنْ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

Then, is He who creates (everything) equal to one who does not? Would you still pay no heed? [17]

And if you count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [18] And Allah knows what you conceal and what you reveal. [19]

And those whom they invoke beside Allah do not create anything, rather they are themselves created [20] - dead, having no life. And they do not know when they shall be raised again. [21] Your God is One God. So, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are defiant and they are arrogant. [22] Invariably, Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal. Surely, He does not like the arrogant. [23]

### Commentary

Verses appearing immediately earlier described the many blessings of Allah Ta'ālā in details, proved that He alone is their Creator and established that He is unique in this matter. Now, in the present verses, there comes an admonition against the failure of people to recognize that there is a fact behind the statement describing all these blessings - and that is Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah Ta'ālā, except whom there is none worthy of worship. Therefore, it was said: When it stands proved that Allah alone made the heavens and the earth, made the mountains and rivers, vegetation and animals, trees and plants with their fruits and flowers, how can that most sacred Being that is the Creator of all these things become, for no reason, like idols and icons which cannot create anything? Why would you not understand something so elementary?

## Verses 24 - 29

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أُنْزِلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِيَحْمِلُوا  
 أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ۖ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ  
 الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَآتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِنَ  
 الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَنَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ  
 لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِى الَّذِينَ  
 كُنْتُمْ تُشَاقِقُونَ فِيهِمْ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ  
 وَالسُّوءَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ الَّذِينَ تَتَوَقَّعُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِى أَنْفُسِهِمْ  
 ۖ فَالْقُوا السَّلَامَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوءٍ ۖ بَلَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ  
 تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوًى  
 الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And when it is said to them, "What has your Lord sent down?" They say, "It is nothing but the tales of the ancient." [24] Hence, they shall carry their burdens in full on the day of Judgment, and some of the burdens of those whom they mislead without knowledge. Remember, evil is the burden they carry. [25]

Those before them did make plots. Then (the command of) Allah came upon their buildings (uprooting them) from the foundations. So roofs fell down upon them from above, and the punishment came to them from where they would not perceive. [26] Then, on the Day of Judgment, He will put them to disgrace and will say, "Where are My partners for whom you used to quarrel?" Those endowed with knowledge will say, "Today, the disgrace and the ill fate are upon the disbelievers - [27] the ones to whom the angels brought death while they were (still) unjust to themselves." Then, they will take to submission, (yet will say), "We used to do nothing wrong." (They will be answered) Why not? Allah knows what you used to do. [28] Hence, enter the gates of Jahannam to live there for ever. And evil is the abode of the arrogant. [29]

## Commentary

It will be recalled that, after describing the blessings of Allah and proving that He was unique in the creation of the universe, the text made a pointed reference to how the polytheists chose to stick to their own ways of error. In the present verses, the text describes how they, not content with their own straying, tried that others should also go astray like them. The punishment they would get for doing that has also been stated here. Earlier to that (24), there is a question about the Qur'ān, and the addressees of the question, at this place, are the polytheists. It is their haughty and ignorant answer which has been mentioned here alongwith a warning of consequences for this attitude. Then, after five verses (30), the same question has been addressed to believers who fear Allah which is followed by their answer, and where a promise of reward for it has been mentioned.

The Holy Qur'ān does not explicitly say as to who asked the question. Therefore, commentators have expressed different views in this matter. Some say that the question was asked by disbelievers. Others say that it was asked by Muslims. Still others take one question to have been asked by the polytheists while the other by Muslims. But, the Holy Qur'ān has kept it ambiguous. This is to indicate that there is no need to argue as to where the question came from. What has to be seen is the answer and, more importantly, its ultimate consequence - which, the Qur'ān has itself chosen to describe.

The essence of the answer given by the polytheists is that they simply refused to acknowledge that there was any word of Allah really revealed from Him. In fact, they dismissed the Qur'ān as nothing but tales of people from early ages. Thereupon, the Qur'ān admonished those unjust people for disinforming people about the Qur'ān by telling them that it was nothing but the tales of the ancient whereby they make others too go astray like them. As for the consequences, these they shall have to face. It means that the total curse of their sins has to fall on them anyway on the Day of Judgment, but part of the curse of the evil consequences of their role in misguiding others will also fall on them. Then it was said that the burden of sins which these people are piling up on their shoulders is a terribly evil burden.



## Verses 30 - 34

وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا خَيْرًا ۚ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي  
هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ جَنَّاتُ  
عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ ۖ  
كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ الَّذِينَ تَوَقَّعَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ ۚ  
يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ هَلْ  
يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ  
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾  
فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

And it is said to the God-fearing, "What has your Lord revealed?" They say, "The best." Those who do good in this world, there is good for them. And, indeed, the abode of the Hereafter is much better. And excellent is the abode of the God-fearing - [30] the eternal gardens they enter, with rivers flowing beneath them. For them there is what they desire. That is how Allah rewards the God-fearing - [31] the ones to whom angels bring death while they were pure (in beliefs and deeds). They (angels) say, "Peace on you! Enter Paradise for the deeds you have been doing." [32]

They are waiting for nothing but that the angels come to them, or comes the command of your Lord. Similarly acted those who were before them. And Allah did not wrong them, rather they were doing wrong to themselves. [33] So, the evil of what they did overtook them, and they were encircled by the very thing they used to mock at. [34]

## Verses 35 - 40

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ  
وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ

قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ  
 أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى  
 اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ ۖ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا  
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِن تَحْرِصْ عَلَى هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 لَا يَهْدِي مَن يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ  
 أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ ۖ بَلَى وَعَدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَلَكِن أَكْثَرَ  
 النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يُخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَذِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ  
 لَهُ ۖ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾

And the polytheists said, "If Allah had so willed, we would have not worshipped anything other than Him - neither we nor our forefathers - nor would we have made anything unlawful without (command from) Him." Similarly acted those who were before them. Therefore, the messengers are responsible for nothing but to convey the message clearly. [35]

And We did raise a messenger among every people, with the message, "Worship Allah and stay away from the Rebel." Then, there were some among them whom Allah guided, and there were others on whom deviation (from the right path) was established. So, travel on earth and see how was the fate of those who belied (the prophets). [36]

If you are keen on their guidance, then, (remember that) Allah does not lead to the right path the ones whom He lets go astray, and for them there are no helpers. [37] And they swore by Allah, taking great pains in their oaths: "Allah shall not resurrect those who die." Why not? It is a promise on His part which is due to come true, but most of the people do not know. [38] - so that He discloses for them what they have been disputing about, and so that those who disbelieve may know that they were liars. [39] Our only word for a thing when We intend it is that We say to it, "Be," and it comes to be. [40]

## Commentary

The first doubt expressed by these disbelievers was: If Allah does not like our Kufr and Shirk and other unlawful deeds, why would He not stop us from doing so by force?

The absurdity of this doubt was all too evident. Therefore, instead of answering it, just saying words of comfort for the Holy Prophet ﷺ was considered sufficient, so that he does not feel sad about such senseless questions. The reason why their doubt was absurd is also obvious. Allah Ta'ālā has set up the system of this world on the basic arrangement that human beings have not been kept under compulsion totally. A kind of power to choose was given to them. If they use this choice in obedience to Allah, they have their reward for it; and if they use it to disobey Him, then, there stands His promise of punishment. That there will be a day of Judgment when the dead shall be resurrected and called to account for their deeds are the consequential outcome of this early warning. If Allah Ta'ālā had decided that He would force everyone to obey Him, who then would have dared to remain outside the fold of obedience to Him? But, His wisdom so required that such compulsion was not appropriate. Therefore, choice was given to human beings. Now, if the disbelievers were to say - had Allah disliked our ways, why would He not stop us by force? - it is an absurd and hostile question.

## Has a Rasūl of Allah appeared in India and Pakistan too?

From verse 36 in the present Sūrah: وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا (And We did raise a messenger among every people), as well as from verse 24 of Sūrah Fāṭir: وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (And there is no group of people among whom there has not been a warner - 35:24), it outwardly appears that messengers may have also been sent to areas now known as India and Pakistan - whether residents of the area, or located in another country whose deputies or emissaries had reached there. Then, there is the verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: لِنُنذِرَكُمْ مَا أَنذَرْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ (so that you may warn a people unto whom came no warner - 28:46). The sense released by the verse is that no warner had come before him to the people unto whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent. This can be answered by saying that this obviously refers to the people of Arabia who became the first addressees of the prophetic mission of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ - the fact being that no prophet since Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليه السلام had appeared among them. There-

fore, the title given to these people in the Holy Qur'ān was **أُمِّيَّيْنَ** : "Ummyyīn" (the unlettered ones). This does not necessarily imply that no prophet came before him in the rest of the world as well. Allah knows best.

### Verses 41 - 42

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
حَسَنَةً ۖ وَلَا جَزَاءَ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾  
وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**And those who have migrated for the sake of Allah after they were oppressed, We shall give them a good place in the world and, of course, the reward of the Hereafter is much greater, if they only knew! [41] - those who kept patient and who place trust in their Lord. [42]**

### Commentary

The verb: هَاجَرُوا (*hājarū*) is a derivation from *hijrat* (pausal : *hijrah*) which literally means to leave one's homeland. The leaving of one's homeland done for the sake of Allah is an act of great obedience and worship in Islam. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'الْهَجْرَةُ تَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهَا' ('Hijrah demolishes all sins that were before it').

This Hijrah is Farḍ (obligatory) and Wājib (necessary) under some situations while it is recommended as desirable and better (Mustaḥabb) under some others. Related injunctions have appeared in details under comments on verse 97 of Sūrah An-Nisā : أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً (Was not the earth of Allah wide enough that you might have sought refuge in it? - 3:97) [Ma'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume II] Mentioned here at this place are particular promises which Allah Ta'ālā has made to Muhājirīn, those who do Hijrah, that is, leave their homeland for His sake.

### How does Hijrah bring Better Life in the Present World?

In the verses cited above, two great promises have been made to Muhājirīn subject to some conditions: (1) To give them a good place right here in this world, and (2) To bless them with the greater reward of the Hereafter which is limitless. The expression: 'a good place in the world'

is highly comprehensive. It includes a good residence for the Muhājir (one who does Hijrah) as well as neighbours who are good. It also includes extended means of living, supremacy over hostile enemies, recognition and fair name among people, and honour which continues through the family, and progeny. (Qurṭubī)

The background of the revelation of the verse is basically the first Hijrah which the noble Companions made to Ethiopia. Then, the probability that it may include the Hijrah to Ethiopia as well as the Hijrah to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah which came after that. Mentioned here in this verse are the same Muhājirīn to Ethiopia, or the Muhājirīn to Madīnah. Therefore, some scholars have said that this promise was for these blessed Ṣaḥābah only, that is, those who had made their Hijrah to Ethiopia, or those who had later done it to Madīnah. As for the promise of Allah, it stood already fulfilled within the present world, something witnessed openly. Everyone saw how Madīnah was made for them the real good place to live. Instead of hostile neighbours, they lived among those who were sympathetic, sharing and sacrificing. Enemies were conquered and subdued. Within a short period of time since their Hijrah, doors of ample sustenance were thrown open for them. The poor and needy of yester years became wealthy citizens of the day. Many countries of the world came under their sway. Such were their achievements in moral greatness and beauty of conduct that they remain receiving words of praise from friends and foes alike even to this day. Allah Ta‘ālā blessed them with great honour, and their generations as well. These were things that were to take place in this world, which they did. Now, the promise of the Hereafter shall also be fulfilled. But, says Abū Ḥayyān in his Tafsīr Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا عَامًّا فِي الْمُهَاجِرِينَ كَانُوا مَا كَانُوا فَيشْمَلُ أَوْلَهُمْ وَآخِرُهُمْ

The expression: **الَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا** (And those who migrated) is general and inclusive of all those who leave their homeland whatever their country or time. Therefore, this includes all Muhājirīn, from the very first ones down to the last among them who do their Hijrah for the sake of Allah right upto the Last Day, the day of Al-Qiyāmah. (v. 5, p. 492)

This is also as required by the general exegetic rule under which a commentator relies on the general sense of the word, even though there

be a particular event or group as the prime cause of the revelation of the verse. Therefore, included in this promise are Muhājirīn of the whole world and of all times - and the fulfillment of both these promises for all Muhājirīn is certain.

A similar promise has been made for Muhājirīn in the following verse of Sūrah An-Nisā': وَسَعَةً [And whoever migrates in the way of Allah he shall find many a place to settle and wide dimension (of resources) - 4:100] particularly promised wherein are spatial abundance and extensive means. But, alongwith these promises, the Holy Qur'an has also put forth some qualifications of Muhājirīn and some conditions of Hijrah as well. Therefore, those deserving of the fulfillment of these promises can only be the Muhājirīn who possess these qualifications and who have satisfied the desired conditions.

Out of these, the very first condition is that of: فِي اللَّهِ (fil-lāh: for the sake of Allah) which means that the purpose of doing Hijrah should only be to please Allah Ta'ālā and that, in it, there be no selfish motives of material gains such as business or employment. The second condition is that these Muhājirīn be victims of injustice as stated in: مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا (after they were oppressed). The third qualification is that they stay patient against initial disadvantages and difficulties showing steadfastness and fortitude as pointed out in: الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا (those who kept patient). The fourth qualification is that they, even while utilizing all available material means, make it a point to place their trust in Allah alone for every ultimate success comes from Him alone, as described in: وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (and who place trust in their Lord).

This tells us that there are initial difficulties in everything undertaken. However, should a Muhājir fail to find the promised good place and favourable condition, then, instead of doubting the promise of the Qur'an, he better assess his intention, sincerity and conduct on which these promises have been made. Once this is done, he will discover that it was but his own fault, may be the intention was not pure, or there was a lack of endurance and trust.

### Migration and Hijrah : Different Kinds and Their Injunctions

At this point, Imām Al-Qurṭubī has given details about migration and Hijrah highlighting their difference alongwith some related injunc-

tions. This is being reproduced here in view of its relevant usefulness.

Quoting Ibn al-‘Arabī, Al-Qurṭubī says that going out of the homeland and travelling through the earth is either to run from something and find a safe haven, or to seek and get something. The first kind of trip which is to escape and be safe from something is called Hijrah which is of six kinds:

1. Going from Dār al-Kufr (Abode of Disbelief) to Dār al-Islām (Abode of Islām): This kind of journey was obligatory (Farḍ) even during the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it shall remain obligatory, subject to capability and ability, right through the day of the Qiyāmah (when there is no security of life, property and honour, or that it is not possible to fulfill religious obligations, the Farā’iḍ of Dīn). If one continues to stay in Dār al-Ḥarb (technically an enemy country of disbelievers at war with Muslims), one will be considered a sinner.

2. To get out of Dār al-Bid’ah (Abode overtaken by deviation from established religion): Ibn Qāsim says that he had heard from Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى that it is not Ḥalāl for any Muslim to stay at a place where the early righteous elders of the Muslim community (*al-Salaf-al-Ṣaliḥūn*) are criticised and maligned. After reporting this statement, Ibn al-‘Arabī writes that it is totally correct - because, should you be unable to eradicate the practice of what is forbidden, then, it becomes necessary for you that you should remove your own self from that place, and have nothing to do with it. This is as commanded by Allah Ta‘ālā in the Qur’ān: *وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ* (And when you see those who indulge in Our verses adversely, turn away from them - 6:68).

3. To get out of a place overtaken by what is Ḥarām: This is because the quest for what is Ḥalāl is obligatory (Farḍ) on every Muslim.

4. To move out in order to avoid being subjected to physical pain: This kind of journey is permissible. In fact, it is a blessing from Allah that one should leave a place where danger exists that he will be physically hurt by enemies. So, this is his way out of that danger. This fourth kind of journey was first made by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. It was to seek deliverance from the pain inflicted on him by his people. When he left ‘Irāq for Syria, he had said: *إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي* (I am a *muhājir* [emigrant] unto my Lord - 29:26). After him, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام made a similar journey

from Egypt to Madyan: **فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ** (he got out from there, fearing, watching - 28:21).

5. To move out due to unsuitable climate or likely diseases: This is the fifth kind of journey which has also been permitted by Islam as the Holy Prophet ﷺ had advised some shepherds to settle by the grooves outside Madinah because the climate of the city did not suit them. Similarly, Sayyidnā ‘Umar al-Fārūq ؓ had sent an executive order to Sayyidnā Abū ‘Ubaidah ؓ that he should shift the provincial capital from Jordan to some site located on a higher altitude where the climate is not bad.

But, this is on condition that there be no plague or other epidemic diseases affecting the area. And if, an epidemic does spread out in an area, it is governed by another rule, that is, those who are already present there do not have to get out from that area. As for those who are outside it, they should not go in there - as it happened with Sayyidnā ‘Umar al-Fārūq ؓ during his journey to Syria. When he reached the borders of Syria, he was told that a plague has spread throughout that country. Hearing that, he hesitated from entering that country. He went into repeated consultations with the Ṣaḥābah to resolve this problem. The resolution came only after Sayyidnā ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān ibn Al-‘Awf ؓ narrated a Ḥadīth in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ had said:

إِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَلَسْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَهْبِطُوا عَلَيْهَا (رواه الترمذی وقال حديث حسن صحيح)

When plague spreads in an area where you are present, do not go out from there; and when it spreads in an area where you are not already present, do not go in there (after having heard of plague). (This Ḥadīth has been reported by Tirmidhī who calls it Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ)

At that time, Sayyidnā ‘Umar al-Fārūq ؓ, in obedience to the command of the Ḥadīth, proclaimed that the whole caravan shall turn back and go home.

Some ‘Ulamā have pointed out that this Ḥadīth has a particular element of wisdom in it, that is, the people staying in an area affected by some epidemic are most likely to be infected by its germs. If they were to run away from there, the one who is infected dangerously is not going to



survive anyway, but he would infect others wherever he goes. Hence, the wise decision.

6. To secure personal property and possessions: When someone feels the danger of being hit by thieves and robbers at a certain place, he should move away from there. The Shari'ah of Islam has permitted doing this as well because the property and possessions of a Muslim are as sacrosanct as his or her life.

These six kinds belong to migration undertaken to run for safety against something. Then, there is the journey undertaken to seek and get something. It has nine kinds:

1. The journey for moral self-correction: It means touring and travelling through Allah's earth for the particular purpose of witnessing the creation of Allah Ta'ālā, the manifestations of His most perfect power, and having a spot observation of the sad end of past peoples in order to learn one's essential lesson in how to live sensibly and confidently. The Holy Qur'ān has exhorted people to embark on such trips, for instance in: *أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ* (Have they not travelled around the earth and seen how was the end of those before them? - 35:44). 'Ulamā have identified the journey undertaken by Sayyidnā Dhul-Qarnain as a journey of this kind, while some of them suggest that his journey through the earth was to establish Divine Law on it.

2. The journey of Hajj: That it is an Islamic duty subject to some conditions is well known.

3. The journey of Jihād: All Muslims know that it is also either obligatory (*farḍ*), or necessary (*wājib*), or recommended (*mustaḥabb*).

4. The journey for employment: If a person cannot find economic support for his needs in his homeland, it is incumbent on him that he travels elsewhere and look for an employment opportunity there.

5. The journey for trading: It means travelling to acquire wealth in excess to the measure of need. According to Islamic legal norms, this too is permissible. Allah Ta'ālā says: *لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ*: 'There is no sin on you that you seek the bounty of your Lord (by trading) - 2:198.' Here, by 'seeking of bounty' in this verse, the reference is to trading. When Allah Ta'ālā has allowed trading even during the Hajj trip, then,

undertaking a journey for the sole purpose of trading becomes permissible in the first degree.

6. The journey for education: That it is an absolute duty in terms of religious need, and that it is an obligation of sufficiency (*farḍ al-kifāyah*: an obligation which, if discharged by some, would suffice for others) in terms of what is more than needed, is widely known and amply recognized.

7. The journey to a place believing it to be sacred and blessed: This is not correct and proper except for the three Masājid and they are: (1) Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām (The Sacred Mosque of Makkah al-Mukarramah) (2) Al-Masjid An-Nabawiyy (The Mosque of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah) (3) Al-Masjid Al-Aqṣā (Baytul-Maqdis). [This is the view of Al-Qurṭubī and Ibn al-‘Arabī. Other revered scholars of early Islam and their successors have also allowed the undertaking of travel to visit places generally considered blessed - Muḥammad Shafī’].

8. The journey undertaken to guard Islamic frontiers: This is known as *Ribāṭ*. There are many Ḥadīth reports which commend it strongly. (For details on *Ribāṭ*, please see our comments under Verse 200 of Sūrah ‘Āl-‘Imrān in Ma‘āriful-Qur‘ān, Volume II)

9. The journey to visit relatives and friends: This too has been classed as an act deserving of return and reward. A Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim mentions the prayer of angels in favour of those who undertake a journey to visit relatives and friends (which is valid only when the purpose of meeting them is to seek the pleasure of Allah Ta‘ālā and not to seek any material gains). Allah knows best. (Qurṭubī, p. 349-351, v. 5, Sūrah An-Nisā’)

### Verses 43 -44

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسَلُّوْا اَهْلَ الدِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا اِلَيْكَ الدِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

And We did not send (messengers) before you other than

men whom We inspired with revelation. So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Message, if you do not know. [43] (We sent them) with clear signs and scriptures. And We sent down the Message (The Qur'ān) so that you explain to the people what has been revealed for them and so that they may ponder. [44]

### Commentary

According to Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, it was after the revelation of the first verse cited above that the Mushrikīn of Makkah sent their emissaries to the Jews of Madinah to find out if it was true that all earlier prophets had always been from the genus of men.

Though, included under the Qur'ānic expression: أَهْلُ الذِّكْرِ (Ahludh-Dhikr) were the people of the Book and believers all together, but it was obvious that the Mushrikīn (disbelievers) were to be satisfied only by the statement of non-Muslims - because they themselves were not satisfied with what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was telling them. So, how could they accept the statement of other Muslims?

The word: ذِكْرٌ (*dhikr*) in the combination of: أَهْلُ الذِّكْرِ [Ahludh-Dhikr : translated here as 'the people (having the knowledge) of the Message'] is used to carry more than one meaning. One of these is 'Ilm or knowledge. It is in this sense that the Holy Qur'ān has identified the Torah too as Dhikr: وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ : 'And verily We have written in the Zabūr (Scripture, Psalms), after the Dhikr (the Message, Torah)' - 21:105. Similar to this is the statement which follows next: أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ [And We sent down the Message (The Qur'ān) to you - 21:106]. Here, the word: الذِّكْرُ (*Adh-Dhikr*) means the Qur'ān. Therefore, 'ahludh-dhikr' literally means 'the people of knowledge' (as refined in the cited translation). And who are those referred to as Ahlul-'Ilm or 'the people of knowledge' at this place? As apparent in this case, they refer to the scholars among the people of the Book, the Jews and Christians. This is the view of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Ḥasan and As-Suddiyy and others. Then, there are scholars who have taken 'Adh-Dhikr' at this place as well in the sense of Al-Qur'ān, and thus explained 'Ahludh-Dhikr' in the sense of Ahlul-Qur'ān. However, the clearest position taken in this matter is that of Rummānī, Zajjāj and Aḏharī. They say:

المراد باهل الذكر علماء اخبار الامم السالفة كائنا من كان فالذكر بمعنى الحفظ

كَانَهُ قِيلَ اسْأَلُوا الْمُطَّلَعِينَ عَلَى أَخْبَارِ الْأُمَمِ يَعْلَمُوكُمْ بِذَلِكَ

'Ahludh-Dhikr' means authentic historians of past peoples based on this investigative position, this definition includes therein the people of the Book, the Jews and Christians, and the people of the Qur'ān, the Muslims as well.

The word: *الْبَيِّنَاتُ* (*al-bayyināt*) in verse 44 means clear signs and miracles, the later being more aptly applicable here. The word: *زُبُرٌ* (*zubur*) is the plural form of: *زُبْرَةٌ* (*zubarah*) which means large pieces of iron as in: *أَتُرِي زُبُرَ الْحَدِيدِ* (give me pieces of the iron - 18:96). Because of the relevance of putting pieces together, writing is called: *زَبَرَ* (*zabar*), and a written book is known as: *الزَّبْرُ* (*az-zibr*) with its plural as: *الزُّبُورُ* (*az-zabūr*). In short, at this point, it means the Book of Allah which includes Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and Qur'ān.

## Non-Mujtahids must follow Mujtahid Imāms:

### The Essence of Taqlīd

Though, the sentence: *فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ* [So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Message, if you do not know - 43] has appeared at this place in relation with a particular subject, but its words are general and are inclusive of all other matters of concern. Therefore, given the way Qur'ān has with words, this is really an important rule of procedure based on reason and revelation both, that is, those who do not know injunctions revealed for them ask those who do, and act accordingly. It is as simple as that. So, it is the duty of those who do not know that they should act in accordance with what they are told by those who do. This is what Taqlīd (to follow in trust) is. Not only that it is an explicit command of the Qur'ān, there is just no other way the mass practice of religion can be achieved, even if it was to be argued rationally. This rule has been in practice throughout the Muslim community right from the age of the noble Ṣaḥābah to this day without any division or difference. Even those who disavow Taqlīd do not reject the kind of Taqlīd under which those who are not 'Ālim (knowledgable in religion) should take Fatwā from the 'Ulamā' and act accordingly. And it is obvious that, even if the 'Ulamā' were to give proof of their view from the Qur'ān and Sunnah to masses of people who are unaware, they would still accept these arguments and proofs on the authority of, and trust and confidence in the same 'Ulamā'. They themselves do not have the ability to under-

stand and assess arguments and proofs presented. And Taqlīd is nothing but that one who does not know places his trust and confidence in someone who knows and accepts the injunction in question as the injunction of the Sharī'ah, and acts accordingly. This is one Taqlīd the justification of which - in fact, the necessity of which, leaves no room for any difference.

However, as for 'Ulamā' who themselves have the ability to understand Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and know the places where consensus (Ijmā') exists, they are free to act, in the case of such injunctions as have been clearly and explicitly mentioned in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth - and in which there exists no difference among the learned Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn as well - in these they can act directly according to Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Ijma'. In these matters, 'Ulamā' need not follow (Taqlīd) any Mujaḥid. But, there are particular injunctions and rulings which have not been explicitly spelt out in Qur'ān and Sunnah, or wherein there appears to be some contradiction in the 'āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān and the *riwāyāt* (narrations) of Ḥadīth, or in which there has come up some difference among the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn in determining the meaning of Qur'ān and Sunnah - such rulings and injunctions are the object of Ijtihād. In the terminology of Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence), these are called issues and problems in which Ijtihād is possible. The rule which governs this is that an 'Ālim who does not possess the class and rank of Ijtihād, he too must follow one of the Mujaḥid Imāms in these issues. Just relying on personal opinion, preferring one verse or narration and going by it while dismissing another verse or narration as less weightier is something not permissible for him.

Similarly, there are particular injunctions not mentioned explicitly in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. To deduce these out employing the principles provided by the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and to arrive at and determine their precise Islamic legal operative order (*al-ḥukm ash-shar'i*), is the functional prerogative of only those Mujaḥids of the Muslim Ummah who occupy the highest station of expertise in the Arabic language, its lexicography, idioms and modalities (*ṭuruq*) of usage, and who possess an additional mastery over all fields of knowledge related to Qur'ān and Sunnah, and above all, who are credited with a conduct of life marked by exemplary piety and godfearingness. Such people are no less than the

great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Shāfiʿī, Mālik, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, or Awzāʿī, jurist Abū Al-Laith and others like them. These were people Allah Taʿālā had specially blessed. They lived closer to the age of prophethood, and that of the Ṣaḥābah and the Tabiʿīn. Under the canopy of this *barakah*, Allah Taʿālā had bestowed upon them a very special taste of understanding the principles and objectives of the Sharīʿah and an equally special expertise of extracting textually non-prescribed (*ghayr manṣūṣ*) laws from the laws already prescribed in the sacred texts (*manṣūṣ*) by using the methodology of analogical deduction (*qiyās*). Now, in such issues and problem where Ijtihād efforts have been exhausted at the highest conceivable level, it is necessary even for the 'Ulamā' at large that they must follow one of the Mujtahid Imāms. Going by any new opinion contrary to that of the Mujtahid Imāms is error.

This is why great men of learning, 'Ulamā', Muḥaddithīn and Fuqahā' like Imām al-Ghazālī, Rāzī, Tirmidhī, Ṭaḥāwī, Ma'zini, Ibn Hu-mām, Ibn Qudāmah and hundreds and thousands of early and later men of learning of the same standard, despite their high expertise in fields of Arabicism and Islamic Religious Law, have always remained voluntarily restricted to following Mujtahid Imāms invariably. They never considered it permissible to give a Fatwā following their own opinion, contrary to all Mujtahid Imāms.

Nonetheless, these blessed souls did have that standard ranking in learning and piety that they assessed the sayings of the Mujtahid Imāms on the anvil of proofs from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, after which they would go by the saying of the Imām which they found, out of the sayings of the Mujtahid Imāms, closest to the Qurʾān and Sunnah. But, they never thought it to be permissible either to depart from the approach taken by Mujtahid Imāms or to hold some opinion contrary to all of them. The essential reality of Taqlīd is no more than what has been stated here.

After that, came a gradual decline in the standards of knowledge and what was originally based on Taqwā and godliness came to be contaminated with personal interests and preferences. Under such conditions, given the kind of liberty that people could go by the saying of any one Imām in a religious problem of their choice and opt for the saying of some other Imām in some other problem they choose, the inevitable out-

come would be that people would start following their worldly desires in the name of following the Shari'ah by opting for the saying of an Imām which is more conducive to the fulfillment of their worldly desire. This is, as obvious, no following of a religion or Shari'ah. In fact, this would be the following of one's own interests and desires - which is Ḥarām by the consensus of the entire Muslim Ummah. In Muwāfqāt, Allāmah Shaṭībī has dealt with this subject in great details. And Ibn Taymiyyah too, despite his opposition to Taqlīd at large, has rated this type of following in his Fatawa as being Ḥarām by the consensus of the Muslim Ummah.

Therefore, later day jurists of Islam considered it necessary that all those who act according to the precepts of the Shari'ah should be made to follow only one of the Mujtahid Imāms. From here began what was to be known as 'personal following' (*Taqlīd Shakhṣī*) which, in reality, is a functional operative order to keep the system of religion in tact so that people do not succumb to following their own desires under the cover of religion. This is precisely what Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī ؓ did with the total agreement of the noble Ṣaḥābah when he restricted the seven versions (سبعة أحرف) of the Qur'ān to only one version - though all seven versions were reading of the Qur'ān and were revealed through angel Jibrīl as wished by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, when the Holy Qur'ān spread all over non-Arab countries, the danger that it might be altered or interpolated because of its seven readings became acute. So, it was by a total agreement of the Ṣaḥābah that Muslims were instructed to write and recite the Qur'ān in one version only. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī ؓ arranged to have all copies of the Qur'ān written according to this one version which he despatched to various parts of the world. The entire Muslim Ummah follows this Qur'ān even to this day. This never means that other versions were not true or authentic. The fact is that this one version was taken to in the interest of a better management of religious affairs and so that the Qur'ān stays protected against any possible alterations or interpolations.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, all Mujtahid Imāms are true. When one of them is chosen to be followed, it never means that other Imāms are not worthy of being followed. Far from it, it is only a

---

1. All this discussion is based on the theory of Allāmah Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله about the "Seven Versions" (سبعة أحرف). For a detailed treatment of the subject, please see my introduction at the beginning of volume I. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

functional arrangement. One decides for himself in terms of his convenience he has in following a particular Imām. But, while doing so, he also considers other Imāms as worthy of the same respect.

This is totally similar to a situation where it is considered necessary that only one of the many physicians present in town be chosen and assigned particularly for the treatment of a sick person. The reason is that it is not advisable for the patient that he goes about following his personal opinion in using the prescription of one physician at some time and that of another physician at some other time. Such a method of seeking solutions to one's medical problem is patently fatal. It should be understood that the choice of a specific physician made by the patient for his treatment never means that other physicians are no experts, or lack the capability of proper treatment.

The reality of the different juristic schools Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī and Ḥanbalī that emerged in the Muslim Ummah was no more than what has been stated. As for giving it the touch of sectarianism and factionalism or increasing the heat of mutual confrontation and dissention is concerned, it is no valid mission of the revealed religion, nor have the discerning and far-sighted 'Ulamā' ever considered it good. That which happened was that scholarly debate and research by some 'Ulamā' became coloured with polemics which later reached the level of blames and satirical remarks. Then came ignorance-based confrontation which brought people to the outer limit where this state of affairs became the very indicator of being religious!

فالى الله المشتكى ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم

So, before Allah is the complaint and there is no strength and there is no power except with Allah, the High, the Great.

### Note of Caution

What has been written here on the religious question of Taqlīd and Ijtihād is only a very brief summary of the subject, which is sufficient for Muslims at large. As for scholarly research and details of the subject, they are present in books of Uṣūl al-Fiqh. Worth mentioning are: (1) Kitāb al-Muwāfaqāt by Allāmah Shāṭibī, v. IV, Bāb Al-Ijtihād; (2) Kitāb Iḥkām al-Aḥkām by Allāmah Saifuddīn al-'Āmidī, v. III, al-Qā'idah ath-thālitha fī al-mujtahidīn; (3) Ḥujjatullahil-Balighah and 'Iqd al-Jīd



by Ḥaḍrat Shāh Waliyyullah Ad-Dihlawī; and (4) Kitāb al-Iqtiṣād fī at-Taqlīd wa al-Ijtihād by Ḥaḍrat Maulanā Ashraf Alī Thānavī. Interested scholars may wish to refer back to them.

### **Ḥaḍīth is Necessary to Understand Qur'ān : The Rejection of Ḥaḍīth is Really the Rejection of the Qur'ān**

The word: الذِّكْرُ (*adh-dhikr*) in verse 44: وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ : "And We sent down the Message (*adh-dhikr*: The Qur'ān) so that you explain to the people," means, by consensus, the Holy Qur'ān - and, in this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been given the assignment of explaining the meaning of verses revealed to him before people. Herein lies an open proof that the correct understanding of the realities, insights and injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān depends on the statement of the Prophet of Islām, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ. If everyone, by simply acquiring the knowledge of Arabic language and literature, were to become capable of understanding the injunctions of the Qur'ān as Divinely intended, then, the mission of explaining assigned to the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have been rendered meaningless.

In Al-Muwāfāqāt, Allāmah Shāṭibī has provided detailed proof that the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the whole of it, is the explanation of the Book of Allah because the Qur'ān has said about the Holy Prophet ﷺ: وَأَنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ (And surely you are at the height of a sublime nature - 68:4) and which was explained by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها by saying: كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنُ (The Qur'ān was his sublime nature). Thus, the outcome is that every word and deed which provenly issued forth from the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nothing but what was said by the Qur'ān. Some of these are the explanation of a verse of the Holy Qur'ān in express and obvious terms, while in some cases there appears no express mention about them in the Holy Qur'ān, but they are nonetheless based on some kind of revelation, though it was not made part of the Holy Qur'ān. Thus, that too, in a certain way, comes under the operative purview of the Qur'ān itself. This is because according to the clarification of the Qur'ān nothing that he says is prompted by his personal desire, instead of which, it is a Wahy (revelation) from Allah Ta'ālā: وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى (and nor does he talk from desire. It is nothing but a revelation revealed - 53:3-4). This tells us that all acts of worship, dealings with people, personal morals and habits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were, all of

them, through Divine revelation and have the same authority as that of the Qur'ān. Then, there are occasions when he has done something as based on his Ijtihād in which case it is ultimately - either through Divine revelation or through an absence of any restraining order - corrected and supported. Therefore, that too stands empowered with the authority of Wahy (revelation).

To sum up, it can be said that this verse has declared that the purpose for which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent is the explaining of the Qur'ān. This purpose of his mission in this world has also been mentioned in several verses of Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah, and elsewhere too, where it has been referred to as the Ta'līm of Al-Kitāb or Teaching of the Book. Now turn your attention to the great treasure of Ḥadīth which one of the most talented and intellectually peerless people of our community, right from the Ṣaḥābah and Tabi'īn all the way to the Muḥaddithīn of the later period, have guarded more than their lives and delivered it to the Muslim Ummah as *fait accompli*. These were people who spent their whole lives sifting through this treasure and went on to establish the categories of Ḥadīth narrations. As for narrations which they did not find matching enough in authority for the purpose of basing Islamic legal injunctions on them, these they have separated from the treasure of Ḥadīth. Instead, they have simply written standard books based exclusively on these narrations, which have proved correct and reliable after life-long criticisms and researches.

If today a person calls this treasure of Ḥadīth unreliable under one or the other pretext or artifice, it plainly means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ acted against this Qur'ānic injunction when he did not explain what the Qur'ān had said; or, that he had explained it but his explanation did not remain preserved for posterity. Under either of the two conditions, it is being suggested that the Qur'ān has not remained protected as to its meaning - the responsibility of protecting which has been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself: **وَأَنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ** [We, Ourselves, have sent down the Dhikr (the Qur'ān) and We are there to protect it - 15:9]. This claim or inference of such a person is contrary to this textual authority (*nass*) of the Qur'ān. From here it stands proved that a person who refuses to accept the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a binding authority of Islam is, in reality, a denier of the Qur'ān itself. Na'ūdhubillāh: May Allah protect

us from it.

### Verses 45 - 47

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ  
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلِبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ  
بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ ۖ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ  
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

Do they who contrive evil plots feel immune from that Allah makes the earth cave in with them, or from that the punishment comes to them from where they would not perceive, [45] or that He seizes them while roaming about - while they are not to frustrate Him - [46] or that He seizes them while they are in apprehension? So, indeed your Lord is Very Kind, Very Merciful. [47]

### Commentary

In verses appearing previously: ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ (Then, on the day of Judgment, He will put them to disgrace - 27), disbelievers were warned against the punishment of the Hereafter. In the present verses, they have been further warned that it is also possible that they are caught in the punishment from Allah right here in this world much before the punishment of the Hereafter, may be you are sunk into the earth you are sitting on, or you are seized by the punishment of Allah coming from a direction totally inconceivable for you. This is how it happened during the Battle of Badr when they received a punishment at the hands of some ragtag Muslims arrayed against their thousand strong armed youngmen, something they would have never perceived as possible. Or, it was also probable that they be seized by some Divine punishment while roaming about freely, such as, they be hit by a fatal disease, or that they run into an accident by falling down from some height, or simply die by colliding against some hard object. Also possible is yet another form of punishment when punishment may not come all of a sudden, but a general decrease sets in causing wealth, health, fitness, means of sustenance and comfort and peace go on shrinking so much so that the day comes when the people so punished disappear from the face of the earth for

good.

The word: تَخَوُّفٌ (*takhawwuf*) appearing in verse 47 is obviously a derivation from: خَوْفٌ (*khawf*: fear, apprehension). Some commentators have explained this verse in terms of this very sense by saying that one group of people be seized in punishment so that the second group gets apprehensive. Similarly, the second group is seized in punishment which makes the third group become apprehensive. Finally, struck with dread sequentially, comes the end for all of them.

But, the early exegete of the Qur'ān, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ؓ and Mujāhid and other Imāms of Tafsīr have taken the word: تَخَوُّفٌ (*takhawwuf*) in the sense of: تَنْقِصٌ (*tanaqquṣ*). So, it is in accordance with this Tafsīr that it has also been translated in the later sense of 'reducing or decreasing gradually.'

The noble tābi'ī Sa'id ibn al-Musaiyyāb says: When Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ also faced some hesitation about the sense of this word, he addressed the Ṣaḥābah from the Minbar and asked them as to what they understood to be the meaning of '*takhawwuf*'? The audience at large remained silent. But, a person from the tribe of Hudhayl submitted: O Commander of the Faithful, this is a particular idiom of our tribe. We use this word in the sense of *tanaqquṣ*, that is, to decrease gradually. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked: Do the Arabs use this word in the sense of *tanaqquṣ* in their poetry? He said that they do, and cited a couplet by Abū Kabir al-Hudhali, a poet from his tribe, in which this word was used in the sense of decreasing gradually. Thereupon, Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ said: O people, learn about the poetry of Jāhiliyyah because there lies the key to the explanation of your Book and the sense of your speech.

### **For the Understanding of Qur'ān, a Passing Knowledge of Arabic is Not Sufficient**

The first thing the report referred to above proves is that the ability to speak and write the Arabic language is not enough for the understanding of Qur'ān. Rather, necessary for this purpose is a level of efficiency and awareness which could help one understand the classical work done during the early period of the Arabs of Jāhiliyyah - because the Qur'ān has been revealed in that language and idiom. Learning Arabic literature on that level is incumbent on Muslims.

## Reading Poets from Jāhiliyyah is Permissible, Even if Full of Pagan Absurdities

This also tells us that, in order to understand the Qur'ān and to understand the Arabic language and its usage during the period of Jāhiliyyah, it is permissible to read and teach the poetry of that period. Though, it is obvious that such poetry will be full of pagan themes and customs highlighting pagan sayings and doings counter to Islam. But, such was the need to understand the Qur'ān that reading and teaching it was declared to be permissible.

## Even the Punishment of the World is Mercy in Disguise

In the verses cited above, after having mentioned various punishments which could seize disbelievers within this world, it was said in the end: فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ (So, indeed your Lord is Very Kind, Very Merciful). First of all, by using the word: رَبٌّ (Rabb: Lord) here, the hint given is that all these punishments which overtake human beings in this world are there to warn them as part of the dictates of Divine mercy. After that, by introducing the word: رَءُوفٌ (Ra'ūf: Kind) headed by the intensifying particle lam (لـ) that is, the lam of ta'kid, and thus by placing stress on the fact that Allah Ta'ālā was Very Kind and Very Merciful, the hint given was that warnings sent during the life of the world were, in reality, called for by His intrinsic Kindness and Mercy so that heedless men and women would learn from the warning and correct their deeds (before comes 'the last spasm of mass extinction' they themselves are talking about at the closing of the twentieth century, but are still not ready to learn, believe and correct).

### Verses 48 - 57

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلُّهُ، عَنِ الْيَمِينِ  
وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ ذَخِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ  
﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ  
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۚ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَهُ

مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصِبًا أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾  
وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْأَرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾  
ثُمَّ إِذَا كُشِفَ الضُّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾  
لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَتَمْتَعُوا ۖ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ  
لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَهُمْ ۖ تَاللَّهِ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾  
وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَنَهُ ۚ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Have they not observed things Allah has created, their shadows inclining from the right and the left prostrating before Allah, while they are humble? [48] And to Allah prostrates whatever creature there is in the heavens and in the earth, and the angels, and they show no arrogance. [49] They fear their Lord above them and do as they are commanded. [50]

And Allah has said, "Do not take to yourselves two gods. He is but One God. So, Me alone you fear." [51] And to Him belongs what is in the heavens and the earth and it is only He who deserves obedience as due. Would you, then, fear someone other than Allah? [52] And whatever blessing you have is from Allah. Then, once you are touched by distress, to Him alone you cry for help. [53] Then, as soon as He removes the distress from you, a group from among you starts ascribing partners to their Lord. [54] Thus, they reject what We have given to them. So, enjoy yourself and soon you will come to know. [55]

They allocate a share from what We have given to them for those (the idols) they know nothing about. By Allah, you shall definitely be questioned about what you have been fabricating. [56] And they ascribe daughters to Allah - Pure is He - and for themselves, what they desire! [57]

### Verses 58 - 60

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾  
يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَبِهِ ۖ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ

فِي التُّرَابِ ط الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ  
مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ ء وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى ط وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

And when one of them is given the good news of a female child, his face becomes gloomy and he is choked with grief. [58] He hides from people because of the (self-presumed) evil of the good news given to him (wondering): Shall he keep it despite the disgrace or put it away into the dust? Beware, evil is what they decide. [59] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter have evil attributes, and to Allah belong the most exalted attributes. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [60]

### Commentary

In these verses, two peculiar traits of the disbelievers of Arabia have been censured. To begin with, they would take the birth of a baby girl to be so bad that they would go about hiding from people to avoid being disgraced before them. This predicament would then throw them into a fix as to what they should do about it. Should they swallow their pride, embrace the disgrace of becoming the father of a baby girl and resign to the disaster with patience, or just ditch it alive into the dust and get rid of it? Then, on top of it, they had turned so irrational that the child they did not like to have as their own, that they would be audacious enough to attribute to Allah Almighty by declaring that the angels were His daughters!

The sense of the sentence: الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (Beware evil is what they decide) appearing at the end of the second verse (59) actually incorporates these very two traits, as it has been pointed out in Tafsīr Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ with reference to Ibn 'Aṭiyyah. It means: (1) That their decision to take girls to be a punishment and a disgrace is by itself an evil decision; and (2) that the thing they would consider a matter of disgrace for their own selves, they would be too ready to attribute to Allah Ta'ālā.

Also at the end of the third verse (60), in: وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (And He is the Mighty, the Wise), there is a hint that taking the birth of a baby girl to be nuisance and disgrace, and hiding from people because of it, amount to challenging Divine wisdom - as the creation of male and female among the created is the very requisite of wisdom. (Rūḥ al-Bayān)

**Ruling:**

Clear indications are visible in these verses that taking the birth of a girl in the family to be a disaster or disgrace is not permissible under Islam. This is done by disbelievers. Quoting Shir'ah (شرعه) Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān also says that a Muslim should be happier at the birth of a girl in the family so that it becomes a refutation of the act of the people of Jahiliyyah. Says a Ḥadīth: Blessed is the woman who gives birth to a girl in her first pregnancy. That the Arabic word: إِنَاث (*ināth*: females) has been made to precede the word for 'males' in the verse of the Qur'an: إِنَاثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذَّكَوْرَ (He bestows on whomsoever He wills females and bestows on whomsoever He wills males - 42:49) indicates that the birth of a girl from the first pregnancy is better.

In another Ḥadīth, it is said: Whoever finds any of such girls entrusted to his care, and he treats them fairly and favourably, then, these girls will stand as a curtain between him and Hell. (Rūḥ al-Bayān)

To sum up, it can be said that taking the birth of a girl to be bad is a detestable custom of the pagan period. Muslims must abstain from it. In fact, they should be pleased and satisfied with the promise of Allah against it. Allah knows best.

**Verses 61 -65**

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَ لَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَ تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ وَ لِيَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَ لَهُمُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۖ وَهُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ أُنزِلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ



لَا يَأْتِيهِمْ لِقَوْمٌ يُسَمِعُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

And if Allah were to seize the people for their transgression, He would have spared no creature on earth, but He lets them go on upto an appointed time. So, when their time will come, they will not be late for a moment, nor will they be early. [61]

And they assign to Allah what they themselves dislike and their tongues make the false statement that all good is for them. No, it is inevitable that the Fire is for them and that they will be moved fast (towards it). [62] By Allah, We sent (messengers) to communities before you but the Satan made their deeds look good to them. So, he is their patron today and for them there is a painful punishment. [63] And We did not send down the Book to you but in order that you may explain to them what they differed about, and (that it be) guidance and mercy for a people who believe. [64]

And Allah sent down water from the heavens and revived the land with it after it was dead. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who listen. [65]

### Verse 66

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۖ نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ  
وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

And surely for you, there is a lesson in cattle. We provide you, out of what there is in their bellies, from between feces and blood, the drink of milk, pure and pleasant for those who drink. [66]

### Commentary

The pronoun in: بُطُونِهِ (*buṭūnihi*: their bellies) reverts back to: الْأَنْعَام (*al-anām*: cattle). Since the word *al-anām* is plural in the feminine gender, it required that the word used for it should have been: بُطُونُهَا (*buṭūniha*), as it appears in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn: نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا (We provide you, out of what there is in their bellies - 23:21).

Al-Qurṭubī explains this by saying that consideration has been made of the meaning of the plural in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn where the pronoun

has been used in the feminine gender. And, in Sūrah Al-Nahl, the pronoun has been used in the masculine gender in consideration of the plural word as such. Examples of this usage abound in Arabic where a singular pronoun is made to revert to a plural word.

As for bringing out pure milk from between feces and blood, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said: When the fodder eaten by an animal settles in its stomach, the stomach heats it up as a result of which the waste by-product from the fodder settles down leaving milk above with blood being on top of it. Then, nature has entrusted the next job with the liver. It separates the three and directs them to where they belong. Blood goes to veins. Milk goes to the udder of the animal. Now, left in the stomach is waste which is excreted as feces or dung.

### Rulings

1. From this verse we learn that eating good food is not against Zuhd (the way of life marked by not inclining towards worldly enjoyments for the sake of maintaining an ideal state of spiritual purity) specially when it has been acquired with Ḥalāl (lawful) means and provided that no extravagance has been made in it. This is as stated by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. (Al-Qurṭubī)

2. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: When you eat something, say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْهِ وَاَطْعِمْنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ

*Yā Allah, bless it for us and have us eat better than it.*

And he said: When you drink milk, say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْهِ وَزِدْنَا مِنْهُ

*Yā Allah, bless it for us and give us more of it.*

In the second prayer, he did not ask for something 'better than it' (as in the first prayer) for, in human cuisine, there is no nutrient better than milk. Therefore, nature has made milk the very first food given to every man and animal through breast-feeding by mothers. (Al-Qurṭubī)

### Verse 67

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ

فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

**And from the fruits of date-palms and grape-vines, you obtain intoxicants, and good provision. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who understand. [67]**

### Commentary

Described in the previous verses were blessings of Allah Ta'ālā which manifest the stunning marvel of Divine power and creativity. Of these, the first to be mentioned was milk which nature has gifted human beings with after having made it go through its own processing in the bellies of animals separating it from feces and blood and delivering it as a finished product, pure and pleasant, food and drink in one. No subsequent human effort or artifice is needed here. Therefore, the word used in the text is: نُسْقِيكُمْ (*nusqikum*: We provided you with milk to drink). The stress is self-explanatory.

After that it was said that human beings do make things from some fruits of the date-palms and grape-vines as well, which serve them as food, and other benefits. The hint ingrained here is that there is some intervening role played by human ingenuity, innovation and artifice in making the fruits from date-palms and grape-vines yield what they eat or benefit from in other ways. As a result of the factor of intervention, two kinds of things were made. The first is what intoxicates, the common form of which is liquor. The second is: Rizq Ḥasan, that is, good provision, like dates and grapes which everyone is welcome to use as fresh food, or dry it and store it for later use. The purpose is that Allah Ta'ālā, in His perfect power, has given to human beings fruits like dates and grapes, and alongwith it, He also gave human beings the choice to make things they eat and drink out of them. Now the option is theirs. Let them make what they would: Make what intoxicates and knocks their reason out, or make food out of them and get strength and energy!

According to this *tafsīr*, this verse cannot be used to prove the lawfulness of that which intoxicates, that is, liquor. This is because the purpose here is to state the nature of Divine blessings and the different forms they could take when used. It goes without saying that these remain the Divine blessings they are under all conditions. Take the example of foods, drinks and many things of benefit. People use them.

Some also use them in ways which are not permissible. But, the incidence of someone using things wrongfully would not stop a blessing from remaining the blessing it is. Therefore, this is no place to go into details as to which of the uses is lawful and which is otherwise and unlawful. Nevertheless, not to be missed here is the delicate hint given by setting up "*rizq ḥasan*" (good provision) in contrast with "*sakar*" (intoxicant) which tells us that "*sakar*" is not a good provision. According to the majority\* of commentators, "*sakar*" means what intoxicates. (Rūḥ al-Maʿānī, Qurtubī, Jaṣṣāṣ)

These verses are Makki by consensus. As for the unlawfulness of liquor, it came after that in Madīnah. Though liquor was lawful at the time of the revelation of this verse and Muslims used to drink openly, yet, even at that time, a hint was given in this verse towards the fact that drinking of liquor was not good. After that, came the specific injunctions of the Qurʾān which made liquor *ḥarām* (unlawful) clearly, emphatically and categorically. (Condensed from Al-Jaṣṣāṣ and Al-Qurtubī)

### Verses 68 -69

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ  
وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ  
ذُلَّالًا يُخْرِجُ مِنْهَا بَطُونَهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ  
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And your Lord revealed to the honey bee: "Make homes in the mountains, in the trees and in the structures they raise. [68] Then, eat from all the fruits and go along the pathways of your Lord made easy for you." From their bellies comes out a drink of various colours in which there is cure for people. Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who ponder. [69]

### Commentary

The first word: *أَوْحَىٰ* (*awḥā*) in the first sentence of verse 68 has not

\* Some 'Ulamā have also taken it to mean vinegar, or non-intoxicating wine (*nabīdh*) [Jaṣṣāṣ & Qurtubī] but it is not necessary to report details about this element of difference.

been used here in its technical sense of Waḥy or Revelation. Instead, it appears here in its literal sense which happens when the speaker communicates to the addressee something particular, secretly, in a way that the other person remains unable to understand that which has been communicated. Hence, its translation as 'revealed' is also in a literal sense.

As for the next word: النُّحْلُ (*an-naḥl*), it is well-established that the honey bee is a distinct entity among non-human life forms particularly in terms of its intelligence and management. Therefore, the way it has been addressed by Allah Ta'ālā shows a distinct elegance of its own. For the rest of the creation, particularly for life forms in the animal and insect kingdom, it was said: أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْفَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى (He gave everything its form, then provided it with guidance - Ṭaḥā, 20:50), something stated as a universal law for all of them. But, for this tiny creature, it was specially said: أَوْحَى رَبُّكَ (And your Lord revealed) which has been designed to indicate that it has a prominent status among other life forms by virtue of its intelligence, sense and functional insight.

The intelligence of the honey bees can be gauged fairly well by their system of governance. The system of this tiny flier's life operates on the principles of human politics and government. All management rests with one big bee which is the ruling head of all bees. It is her managerial skill and efficient distribution of work which helps run the whole system soundly and safely. Certainly so unique is her system and so established are its rules and regulations that human mind has but to marvel at the phenomena of the bee. This 'queen' itself lays six to twelve thousand eggs in a period of three weeks. By its size, physique and demeanor, it is distinguishable from other bees. This 'queen', following the principle of division of labour, appoints its subjects to handle different matters. Some of them serve on guard duty and do not allow some unknown outsider to enter into the hive. Some stand to protect eggs. Some nurture and train baby bees. Some serve as architects and engineers. The compartments of most roofs made by them range between twenty to thirty thousand. Some bees collect and deliver wax to architects which build homes. They procure this wax material from a whitish powder settled upon vegetation. This material is commonly visible on sugarcane. Some of them sit on different kinds of fruits and flowers and suck their juices which turns into honey while in their bellies. This honey is their

food and the food of their children. And the same is, for all of us too, the essence of taste and nutrition, and the prescription of medicine and remedy.

These different parties discharge their assigned duties very enthusiastically and obey the command of their 'queen' most obediently. If one of them happens to perch on filth, the guards of the hive stop the unwary worker on the outside gate and the 'queen' kills it. One can only wonder about this system and the performance of its managers and workers. (Al-Jawāhir)

The first instruction given through: *أَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ* (your Lord revealed) appears in the next sentence: *أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا* (Make homes in the mountains) which mentions the making of homes. At this point, it is worth noting that every animal makes some sort of a sheltered arrangement to live anyway, then, why is it that bees have been particularly commanded to build 'homes' and that too with such considered attention? Furthermore, the word used here is that of: *بُيُوتٌ* (*buyūt*) which is generally used for the places where human beings live, their homes. By doing this two hints have been given. The first hint is towards the fact: Since bees have to prepare honey, therefore, they should first make a safe home. The second hint is toward another fact: The homes they make will not be like the homes of common animals, instead, their design and construction will be extraordinary. As such, their homes are highly distinct, far different from those of other animals, virtually mind-boggling. Their homes are hexagonal in shape. Measuring them with a pair of compasses and rulers will hardly spell out a difference. Other than the hexagonal shape, they never choose any shape such as that of a square, pentagon or any others as some of their corners turn out to be functionally useless.

Allah Ta'ālā did not simply order the bees to make homes, He also told them as to where they should be located, that is, it should be at some altitude because such places help provide fresh, clean and almost-filtered air flow for the production of honey. Thus, honey stays protected from polluted air as well as from incidences of breakage or damage to the hives. So, it was said: *مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ* (Make homes in the mountains, in the trees and in the structures they raise) so that honey could be prepared in a hygienically safe way. This was the first instruction.

The second instruction appears in: *ثُمَّ كُلِّيْ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (Then, eat from all the fruits) where the bee is being commanded to suck juices from fruits and flowers as it desires and likes. No doubt, what is said here is: *مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (from all the fruits). But, obviously, the word: *كُلِّ* (*kull*) used here does not mean the fruits and flowers of the whole world. Instead of that, it means those within easy reach, and which serve the desired purpose. This word: *كُلِّ* (*kull*) has also appeared in relation to the event concerning the queen of Saba' where it was said: *وَأُوْنِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ* (she has got everything - An-Naml, 27:23). It is obvious that 'all' or 'every' in this sense do not denote totality without exception to the limit that the queen of Saba' be required to have a personal aeroplane, Rolls Royce and palace train! What is meant here is what she needed to have as complement to her function as the ruler of the time. So, here too, the expression: *مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ* (from all the fruits) means nothing but this. As for the bee sucking juices from fruits and flowers, it can be said that the molecular composition of juices she sucks is extremely refined and precious, the extraction of which in identical measure through mechanical means even in our advanced scientific age cannot be accomplished as efficiently.

Then comes the third instruction: *فَاسْلُكِيْ سَبِيْلَ رَبِّكَ ذَلَالًا* (and go along the pathways of your Lord made easy for you). When the bee goes to suck juices from fruits and flowers to places far away from home, then, obviously enough, its return to home base should have been difficult. But, Allah Ta'ālā has made flight routes easy for it. Thus, it goes miles away and returns home without straying or getting lost. Allah Ta'ālā has made for it flying routes in the air because in going by the circuitous pathways on land, there is the likelihood of going astray. So, it can be said that Allah Ta'ālā has subjugated the air space for this humble bee so that it can go home without any let or hinderance.

After that, the real outcome of this revealed command was stated in the following words: *يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا بَطُوْنُهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ، فِيْهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ* (From their bellies comes out a drink of various colours in which there is cure for people - 69). The difference in colour is caused by the difference of climate and by what they suck from. This is the reason why a particular area with abundance of particular kinds of fruits and flowers does leave its effect and taste on the honey produced in that area. Since honey comes in the form of a liquid substance, therefore, it was called '*sharāb*' (drink). Even in this sentence, present there is a decisive proof of the Oneness

and Power of Allah Ta'ālā. Is it not that this tasty and blissful drink comes out from the belly of a tiny animal which, in itself, is armed with poison? The emergence of antidote from poison is really a unique exhibit of the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā. Then, such is the staggering working of nature that milk from milch animals does not turn red or yellow under the effect of different climates and foods while honey from the bee does take different colours.

As for the oft-quoted statement: فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ (in which there is cure for people), it can be said that honey is, on the one hand, an energy-giving food as well as a delicacy in terms of taste and flavor, while on the other hand, it serves as a remedial prescription for diseases too. And why not? This delicate mobile machine which goes about extracting pure and powerful essences from all kinds of fruits and flowers after which it returns home to store them in its safe compartments specially designed, constructed and guarded for a purpose. Now, if natural herbs and plants contain ingredients which have medicinal and curative properties, why would everything disappear from their essences? Honey is used as medicine directly in phlegmatic diseases while in other diseases it is recommended in combination with other ingredients. Expert physicians in the Greco-Arab medical tradition include it specially as a binder in their medicinal electuaries. Another property of honey is that it does not get spoiled itself and, on top of it, it helps preserve other things as well for a long time. This is the reason why eastern physicians have been using it as an alternate of alcohol for thousands of years. Honey is laxative and proves efficient in expelling unhealthy substances from the stomach.

A Ṣaḥābī mentioned the sickness of his brother before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He advised him to give his brother a drink of honey. He returned the next day and reported that his brother was still sick. He repeated his advice. On the third day, when he again said that there was no change in his condition, he said: صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَكَذَبَ بَطْنُ أَخِيكَ (The word of Allah is true. The stomach of your brother is a liar). The sense was that there is nothing wrong with the suggested remedy. It was the particular temperamental condition which had caused delay in the actual effect of the remedy. When the treatment with honey was repeated after that, the patient got well.

At this place in the Holy Qur'ān, the word: شِفَاءٌ (*shifā'*: remedy, cure, bliss) appears as common noun (*nakirah*) in the context of an affirmative sentence. That it is *shifā'* for every disease is not apparent on this basis.



But, the nunnation (*tanwin*) of '*shifā*' which carries the sense of greatness does necessarily prove that the *shifā* in honey is of a great and distinct nature. Then there are those spiritually valiant servants of Allah who just have no doubt about honey being a cure for any disease whatsoever. So firmly convinced they are with their staunch belief in the very outward meaning of this statement of their Rabb that they would treat an abscess or an eye with honey, not to mention other diseases of the body. According to reports about Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ, even if an abscess showed up on his body, he would treat it by applying honey on it. When some of the people asked him as to why would he do that, he said in reply: Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā has said about it in the Holy Qur'an: فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ (In it, there is cure for people). (Al-Qurṭubī)

Allah Ta'ālā deals with His servants in harmony with the belief they have about their Rabb. It was said in Ḥadīth Qudsi\*:

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي

I am with the belief of My servant in Me.

In the last sentence of verse 69: إِنَّ فِيْ ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ (Surely, in that there is a sign for a people who ponder), Allah Ta'ālā has, after having given examples of His perfect power mentioned above, invited human beings once again to look into them and think about them. Allah Ta'ālā, by causing rains to come down, gives new life to dead lands. Winding through the impurities of feces and blood, He makes pipelines of pure and pleasant milk flow for you. On date-palms and grape-vines, He grows sweet fruits from which you make all sorts of syrups and preserves. Through a tiny little living creature with a poisonous bite, He provides for you what is an excellent combination of food, drink, taste, flavor, and cure.

Would you still keep calling gods and goddesses of your making? Would your worship and fidelity still remain detached from your real Creator and Master and attached to lifeless idols of stone and wood? Would your reason still keep looking for escape from truth by suggesting that this whole phenomena is some charismatic working of blind, deaf and inert matter? Face truth, think, realize. These countless master-

\* Al-Ḥadīth Al-Qudsi: The Sanctified Ḥadīth: A technical term for what has been communicated to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his Rabb. Its meanings are from Allah which He reveals for His Rasūl, through inspiration or dream, while its words are from the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.

pieces of Divine creativity, marvels of wisdom and design, and the finest of decisions based on absolute intelligence are the loudest of heralds announcing that our Creator is One, unique and wise, sole object of worship, obedience and fidelity. He alone is the remover par excellence of all difficulties and He alone deserves gratitude and glorification as due.

### Special Notes

1. The verse tells us that, beside human beings, there is consciousness and intelligence in other living creatures too: **وَأَنَّ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ** (There is nothing which does not recite His praises - Al-Isrā', 17:44). However, the degrees of intelligence are different. The intelligence of human beings is more perfect than those of any other living creatures. This is the reason why they have been obligated with the precepts and injunctions of the Sharī'ah. Again, this is the reason why a man or woman who does not remain rational due to insanity, does not remain so obligated very much like other creatures.

2. Another distinction of the honey bee is that the Ḥadīth mentions its superiority. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الذِّبَابُ كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ يَجْعَلُهَا عَذَابًا لِأَهْلِ النَّارِ إِلَّا النَّحْلَ

All bees will go to Hell (like other hurting creatures). They will be made a punishment for the people of Hell, except the honey bee (which will not go to Hell) - (Nawadir al-Uṣūl with reference to Al-Qurṭubī)

According to another Ḥadīth, he has prohibited its killing - Abū Dāwūd.

3. Traditional physicians doubt that honey is the excretion or saliva of the bee. Aristotle had placed bees in a hive made of glass and had closed it. He wished to find out their working system. But, these bees first mounted a curtain made with wax and mud on the inner side of the glass cage and did not start their work until such time that they became certain of having become totally veiled from sight.

Giving an example of the lowness of worldly life, Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ said:

أَشْرَفُ لِبَاسٍ بَنَىٰ أَدَمَ فِيهِ لُعَابُ دُودَةٍ وَأَشْرَفُ شَرَابِهِ رَجِيعُ نَحْلَةٍ

The finest dress of the progeny of Adam is saliva from a tiny insect and the finest of his drinks is the excrement of a bee.

4. From the statement: فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ (in which, there is cure for people) we also find out that treating diseases with medicine is permissible because Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned it as a reward and blessing.

Elsewhere it has been said: وَنَزَّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And We send down from the Qur'ān what is cure and mercy for believers - Al-Isrā', 17:82). Ḥadīth induces people to go for treatment of diseases and use medicines. Some Companions asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: Should we use medicine? He said: Why not? Do take advantage of treatment because for every disease Allah has created, He has also created a matching medicine. But, there is no cure for one disease. They asked: Which disease is that? He said: Extreme old age. (Abū Dāwūd & Tirmidhī from Al-Qurṭubī)

There is yet another narration from Sayyidnā Khuzaymah ؓ. He says: Once I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the practice of blowing on the sick and seeking to cast off diseases which we are used to, or treat ourselves with medicines are the kind of arrangements we make to stay safe against diseases. Can these change the destiny determined by Allah Ta'ālā? He said: These too are nothing but the very forms of Divinely-appointed destiny.

To sum up, there is consensus of all 'Ulamā' on the justification of seeking treatment and using medicine. Many Aḥādīth and reports from the Ṣaḥābah are available in support. If one of the children of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar ؓ was stung by a scorpion, he would give him an antidote and seek to help the child to get well through the benediction of supplicatory recitations. He treated a person suffering from partial paralysis by branding. (Al-Qurṭubī)

It has been reported about some Muslim mystics (Sūfiyā') that they did not like being medically treated. This is also evident from the reported behaviour of some of the Ṣaḥābah as well. For instance, according to a report, Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ fell sick. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ came to visit him and asked him: What is it that ails you? He replied: I am worried about my sins. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ said: Then, do you wish to have something? He said: I wish to have the mercy of my Rabb. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ said: If you like I can call a physician? The answer he gave was: Believe me, it is the 'Physician' Himself who has put

me down (on the sick bed).

But, occurrences of this nature do not go to prove that these blessed souls took medical treatment to be reprehensible (*makrūh*). May be, at that time, it was not upto their personal taste and inclination. Therefore, it was because of their inability to accept it temperamentally that they did not favour to go by it. This is a transitory phase of psyche when one comes under the overwhelming logic and effect of the state one is in, and which cannot be used as an argument to prove that medical treatment is either impermissible or reprehensible. The very request made to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه that he be allowed to bring a physician for him is, in itself, a proof of the fact that treatment is permissible - rather, there are situations when doing so becomes mandatory as well.

### Verse 70

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّيْكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لَكُمْ  
لَا يَعْلَمُ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

**And Allah created you, then He takes you back. And there are some among you who are carried back to the worst part of the age, that he knows nothing after having knowledge. Surely, wherein Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful. [70]**

### Commentary

Mentioned previously were various states of water, vegetation, cattle and honey bee through which Allah Ta'ālā had reminded human beings of His perfect power of creation and of His blessings for the created. Now, through the words of the present verse, they have been invited to ponder over the very state they are in. Human beings were nothing. Allah Ta'ālā blessed them with existence. Then, by sending death when He willed, He terminated that blessing. As for some others, they are, much before their death, carried to such an stage of extreme old age that their senses do not work, they lose the strength of their hands and feet. They understand nothing, nor can they remember what they do. This change in their world-view and self-view proves that knowledge and

power reside in the exclusive domain of the One who is the Creator and Master.

The expression *مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (and there are some among you who are carried back to the worst part of the age) gives a hint that man has seen a time of weakness earlier too. This was the early stage of childhood marked by its lack of understanding and physical strength, and dependence on others in eating, drinking, getting up and sitting down. Then came youth, the time to prosper and move ahead. Then, gradually, man is carried to a stage of the same age of helplessness as it was in early childhood.

The expression: *أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (translated as 'the worst part of the age') means the extreme old age when all physical and mental faculties become weak and confused. The Holy Prophet ﷺ always prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعُمُرِ مِنْ أَنْ أَرُدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ

'O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the evil of age' -

and according to another narration:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أَرُدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ

'O Allah, I seek refuge with you from that I be carried to the worst part of the age.'

The definition of: *أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ* (the worst part of the age) remains undetermined. However, the definition appearing above seems to be weightier, something to which the Qur'an too has alluded by saying: *لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا* (that he knows nothing after having knowledge) that is, the age in which he is in, senses do not remain active as a result of which a person forgets everything he knows.

This 'worst part of the age' (*أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ*) has been defined variously. Some say it is the age of eighty years while some others say it is ninety. Also reported from Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, there is a statement which puts it at seventy five. (Ṣaḥīḥayn as quoted by Maḥzarī)

After that appears the tersely-phrased sentence also mentioned above: *لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا* (that he knows nothing after having knowledge). This is about the phenomena of old age (which, in our time, has given birth to the study of grontology). When one is made to reach its extreme stage, one is left with no functional strength, neither physical nor rational. What he knows now, he may not know moments later. All information he has, he may forget and become like a child born

yesterday who has no knowledge or awareness or understanding or intelligence. Ḥaḍrat 'Ikrimah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى says: 'This state will not prevail upon the reciter of the Qur'ān.'

In the last sentence of the verse, it was said: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ (Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful). It means that from knowledge He knows everyone's age, and from power He does what He wills. If He wills, He can have a strong youngman be overtaken by the signs of the worst part of old age, and should He so will, even a hundred-year old aged man could remain a strong youngman. All this lies within the power of that sole Being in whose divinity there is no partner or associate.

### Verse 71

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۖ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا  
بِرَآدٍ رِزْقِهِمْ عَلَى مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ أَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ  
يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

**And Allah has given some of you preference over others in provision. So, those given preference are not to pass on their provision to their slaves so that they become equal in it: Do they, then, reject the blessing of Allah?**

[71]

### Commentary

In the previous verses, by referring to major manifestations of His knowledge and power and blessings which descend on human beings, Allah Ta'ālā has the natural proof of His Oneness (Tauḥīd). By looking at it, even a person of ordinary commonsense would not accept that any created being can hold a share with Allah Ta'ālā in His attributes of knowledge and power, or in any of the others. In the present verse, this very subject of Tauḥīd has been brought into focus by citing the example of a case in mutual dealing.

It is being said here that Allah Ta'ālā has not, in His infinite wisdom, and in view of His consideration for human good, made all human beings equals in terms of *rizq* or provision. Instead, He has given some of them preference over some others establishing different degrees therein. Someone was made so rich that he owns a lot of things, keeps a staff of

all sorts of servers, spends as he wishes, and his servers too benefit through him. Then, someone was made to work for others who, far from spending on others, was cut out to receive his own expenditure from others. Then, someone was made to be somewhere in the middle, neither so rich as to spend on others, nor so poor and needy as to be dependent upon others even in the necessities of life.

Everyone is aware of the outcome of this natural distribution that he who was given preference in provision and made rich and need-free would never accept to distribute his wealth among his slaves and servants in a way that they too become his equals in wealth.

Understand the drive of this argument by applying this example on polytheists. They too accept that the idols and other created things they worship are, after all, created and owned by Allah Ta'ālā. If so, how can they suggest that the created and the owned become equals to their Creator and Master? Do such people see all these signs and hear all these words, yet go on to ascribe partners and equals to Allah, the necessary result of which is that they reject the blessings given by Allah? Because, if they had admitted that all these blessings have been given by Allah Ta'ālā without the intervention of any self-carved idol, icon, human being and Jinn, then, how could they have equated these things with Allah Ta'ālā?

The same subject has been taken up in the following verse of Sūrah Ar-Rūm:

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِيْ مَا  
رَزَقْنَكُمْ فَأَنتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاءٌ

We have given for you an example from your own people. Have those who are your subjects become sharers with you in the provision given to you by Us whereby you are equal in it? (30:28)

The outcome of this too is: When you do not like to let your servants and your slaves whom you own become equal to yourself, how can you like for Allah that He, and things created and owned by Him, become equal to Him?

### **The Difference in Degrees of Economic Status is Mercy for Mankind**

This verse makes it clear that the presence of different degrees of eco-

conomic status among human beings - that someone is poor, another rich and yet another somewhere in the middle - is not accidental. It is as dictated by the wisdom of Allah Taʿālā, as required by considerations for human good, and is mercy for mankind. If this state (of human society) were not to prevail and if all human beings were to become equal in wealth and possessions, it would have caused a breach of function in world order. Therefore, since the time the world became populated, all human beings have never been equal in terms of wealth and property, in any period, or age, nor can they be. Should such an equality were to be created compulsarily, it will take only a few days when disruption and disorder become openly visible through the entire spectrum of human dealings. Allah Taʿālā has created human beings with varying degrees of temperaments as conditioned by intelligence, strength and functional ability. They have been further classified as low, high and average, a fact which cannot be rejected by any reasonable person. Similarly, it is also inevitable that there be different degrees in wealth and property as well so that every single person is rewarded in terms of individual capability. If the capable and the incapable were made equal, it will discourage the capable. When the capable person has to stay at par with the incapable in economic pursuits, what other motivation would compel him to go on striving and achieving excellence? The necessary outcome of such an approach will be no other but the demise of excellence acquired through functional capability.

### **Qurʾānic Injunctions Against Concentration of Wealth**

Whereas the Creator of the universe gave preference to some over others in physical and rational faculties, and established variance in provision, wealth and property, subject to it, He has also established a strong system of economic equilibrium which aims that no particular group or party or a few individuals take over the treasures of wealth and centers of economic activity. This system also guards against the consequences of such a takeover which dries up the very field where capable people could thrive by utilizing their physical, intellectual and technical capabilities and advance economically. For this purpose, it was said in the Holy Qurʾān: كَيۡ لَا يَكُونُ دُولَةً لِّلۡ اَغۡنِيَاءِ مِّنۡكُمۡ It means: (We made the law of distribution of wealth,) so that wealth does not come to be revolving among the rich from among you - Al-Hashr, 59:7.



The wide-spread turbulence being experienced in the economic systems of the modern world is directly the result of bypassing this wise law given to us by Divine wisdom. On the one hand, there is the capitalist system in which some individuals or groups virtually take over the nerve centers of wealth through the medium of interest and gambling and go on to enslave the entire creation of Allah economically. They are rendered so helpless that they have no escape route left but to serve like slaves and work like dogs in order to get what they can to eke out a living, no matter how miserable. In a situation so sordid, it is a far cry that they would ever be able to step into the field of industry or trade despite having the best of capabilities for this purpose.

As a reaction to this tyranny of capitalists, there rises a counter system in the name of socialism or communism. Their slogan is the removal of disparity between the rich and poor and the creation of equality between all. Masses of people already harassed by the injustices of the capitalist system go after the slogan. But, very soon, they discover that the slogan was nothing but deception. The dream of economic equality never came true. The poor person, despite poverty and hunger, had a certain human dignity, a certain right to do what he wished, but even that human dignity was snatched away by the system. In the communist system, the worth of a human person is no more than a part of its machines. Private ownership of property is simply out of question there. The factory worker owns nothing, not even the spouse and children. Everyone is a part of the state machine. When the machine starts, they have no choice but to start working on their jobs. Other than the so-called objectives of the state, the worker has no conscience or voice. The slightest grievance against the tyranny of the state and that unbearable labour on the job is counted as rebellion against the state the punishment for which is death. In short, hostility towards God and religion and adherence to bland materialism is the basic principle of communism.

These are facts no communist can deny. The writings and doings of their commissars are proofs of this assertion for compiling relevant references to these amounts to making a regular book out of them.

The Holy Qurʾān has provided a system in between the two extremes of tyrannical capitalism and Quixotic communism keeping it free from ex-

cess and deficiency so that no individual or group could, despite there being a naturally placed dissimilarity in provision and wealth, go on to make the creation of Allah at large their slaves only to condemn them to ever rising prices of commodities and virtual famines. By declaring interest and gambling to be unlawful, it has demolished the foundations of illegitimate capitalism. Then, by making a categorical statement that the poor and needy have a right in the wealth of every Muslim, they were admitted as sharers, which is not supposed to be some favour done to them. In fact, it is the fulfillment of a duty. The verse: *فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ* (in their wealth, there is a known right for the asking and the deprived - Al-Mā'arij, 70:24) proves it. After that, by distributing the entire property of a deceased person over individual inheritors of the family, it has eliminated the concentration of wealth. Natural streams, high seas and the self-growing produce of mountain forests were declared to be the common capital of the entire creation of Allah. No individual or group can take possession over them as something owned by them. This is not permissible. Contrary to this, in a capitalist system, these blessings are handled as something owned by capitalists only (under one or the other pretext).

Since diversity and difference in intellectual and practical capabilities is a natural phenomena, and the pursuit of economic gains through them also depends on these very capabilities, therefore, diversity or dissimilarity in the ownership of wealth and property is also a dictate of wisdom. Whoever has the least sense of how things work in this world would find it hard to deny this truth. Even the champions of the slogan of equality could not go far enough with it. They had to abandon their claim of flat equality and were left with no choice but to introduce dissimilarity and incentive-oriented policy in national economy. On May 5, 1960, speaking before the Supreme Soviet, Nikita Khurshev said:

'We are against the movement to eliminate difference in wages. We are openly against the efforts to establish equality in emoluments and to bring them at par. This is the teaching of Lenin. He taught that material motivations will be given full consideration in a socialist society.' (Soviet World, p.346)

That the dream of economic equality had translated itself into its absence since the very early stages, but it did not take much time to witness that this absence of equality and the disparity between the rich and

'Perhaps, there is no developed capitalist country where the disparity in the wages of workers is as high as in Soviet Russia.'

### Verses 72 - 76

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۖ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِعَمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ مِنَّْا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا ۖ هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ ۚ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ

عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ ۚ أَيْنَمَا يُوجِّهُهُ لَا يُاتِ بِخَيْرٍ ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ  
بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

And Allah has created spouses from among you and created for you from your spouses sons and grandsons, and gave you provision from good things. Is it, then, the falsehood that they believe and the blessing of Allah that they reject? [72]

And they worship besides Allah things which have no power to give them anything from the heavens and the earth, nor can they have (such power). [73]

So, do not coin similarities for Allah. Surely, Allah knows and you do not know. [74]

Allah gives an example: There is a slave owned (by someone), who has no power over anything, and there is a person whom We have given good provision from Us. And he spends out of it secretly and openly. Are they equal? Praise be to Allah. But, most of them do not know. [75]

And Allah gives an example: There are two men. One of them is dumb who is unable to do anything, and he is a burden on his master. Wherever he directs him to, he brings no good. Does he equal the one who enjoins justice and is on the straight path? [76]

### Commentary

In verse 72: جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا (Allah has created spouses from among you), a special blessing has been mentioned in that Allah Ta'ālā has created spouses from the same genus so that they remain mutually familiar and their distinction and nobility inherent in the human species also remains stable through generations.

Given here, there may be another hint towards the fact that spouses belong to each other's genus and, as such, their needs and feelings are common to both, therefore, mutual consideration is but necessary for them.

The next sentence of the verse: وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً has been translated as: 'and created for you from your spouses sons and grandsons.'

Though children are born to father and mother both, yet in this verse, their birth has been identified with mothers only. The indication given here is suggestive of the fact that the role of the mother in the birth and the creational formation of the child is more pronounced than that of the father. The father contributes only a lifeless drop. The locale where this drop goes through different kinds of stages from the transformation into human form and shape to becoming alive, and where all these inimitable achievements of nature take place, is a place no other than the womb of the mother. Therefore, in the Ḥadīth, the right of the mother has been made to precede the right of the father.

There is yet another hint visible in this sentence which mentions grandsons alongwith sons, that is, the real purpose behind creating spouses is the procreation and survival of human race so that they have children, then, their children have their children. What else would this be, if not the survival of human species?

After that, by saying: وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ (and gave you provision from good things), mention was made of things which guarantee personal survival. In other words, once a human child is born, food is needed for its personal survival. That too was provided by Allah Ta'ālā. The real meaning of the word: حَفَدَةٌ (*hafadah*) in this verse is that of one who helps and serves. That this word has been used for children suggests that children should always be at the service of their father and mother. (Qurṭubī)

The statement: فَلَا تُضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ (So, do not coin similarities for Allah -74) clarifies an important aspect of the reality of things as they relate to Allah. If ignored, it becomes the breeding ground of all sorts of rejectionist doubts and scruples. The problem is that people would generally take Allah Ta'ālā on the analogy of their own humankind and go on to declare the highest placed among them, a king and ruler, as similar to Allah Ta'ālā. Then, relying on this wrong assumption, they start seeing the Divine system on the analogy of the system of human monarchs. This leads them to take a cue from the fact that since no king can, all by himself, run the administration of the whole kingdom, the system is run by delegating powers to subordinate ministers and officials who do that on his behalf. Similarly, they believe and propose that there have to be some other objects of worship under the authority of Allah Ta'ālā who would help Him out in carrying out His tasks. This is the general theory of all

idol-worshippers and polytheists. This sentence of the Qur'ān has cut off the very root of these doubts by stating that suggesting examples of what has been created and applying them on Allah Ta'ālā, the Creator, is something unreasonable by itself. He is far above similarities and analogies and conjectures and guesses.

In the first of the two examples given in the last two verses, the description is that of a master and a slave, that is, the owner and the owned. By giving this example, it is being said: When these two, despite being from the same genus and the same kind, cannot be equal to each other, how then could you equate someone or something created by Allah with Him?

In the second example, there is a man who bids justice and teaches what is good. This is a model of his intellectual perfection. Then he himself takes the path of moderation and right guidance. This is the model of his practical perfection. Set against the power of this intellectually and practically perfect man, there is the other man who cannot do anything for himself nor can he do anything right for others. These two men of two different kinds, despite being from one genus, one species and one brotherhood, cannot be equal to each other. So, how can some created being or thing become equal to the Creator and Master of the universe who is Absolute in Wisdom, Absolute in Power, and All-Knowing and All-Aware?

### Verses 77 - 83

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ  
أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ  
بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ  
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي  
جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ ۚ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ  
﴿٧٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ جُلُودِ  
الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْ أَصْوَافِهَا

وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثَانًا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم سَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمُ بَأْسَكُمْ ۖ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٨٢﴾ يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And the Hour is nothing but like the twinkling of the eye, or even quicker. Of course, Allah is powerful over everything. [77]

And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing, and He made for you ears, eyes and hearts, so that you may be grateful. [78]

Did they not look at the birds, subdued, in the atmosphere of the sky? No one holds them but Allah. Surely, in that there are signs for a people who believe. [79]

And Allah has made for you of your houses a place for comfort, and made for you houses from the hides of cattle which you find light the day you travel and the day you camp, and out of their wool and their fur and their hair (He created) household goods and things of enjoyment for a time. [80]

And Allah has made for you shades from what He has created, and made for you shelters in the mountains and made for you shirts which protect you from heat and shirts which protect you in your battles. [81] This is how He perfects His favour upon you, so that you may submit. If they still turn away, then, your responsibility is only to convey the message clearly. [82]

They are aware of Allah's favour, yet they deny it. And most of them are ungrateful. [83]

## Commentary

The Divine statement: لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (when you knew nothing - 78) indicates that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. When born, man has no knowledge or skill. Then, in proportion to growing human needs, man is made to absorb some knowledge, bit by bit, di-

rectly from Allah Ta'ālā in which no role is played by the parents or teachers. First of all, man was taught to cry. This one qualification alone provides all he needs at that time. Hungry or thirsty, he cries. Feels hot or cold, he cries. If some other discomfort bothers him, he would still cry. Nature has poured a special kind of love in the hearts of the father and the mother for the needs of the infant, because of which, when they hear the sounds made by the child, they become all too eager to find out what is bothering the baby, and all too willing to remove the problem. If the child was not inducted into this act of crying as part of his or her early education from a side no less than that of Allah Himself, who else could have trained the child to employ this skill and start crying like that as and when there be some need. Alongwith it, Allah Ta'ālā also taught the child, inspiration-wise, that he or she should use gums and lips to suck milk, the child's energy food, from the breast of the mother. If this education and training was not natural and direct, no teacher anywhere could dare make this new-born learn to pout and move the mouth right and suck nipples on the breast. Thus, with the increase in the needs of the child, nature took care of teaching its charge directly without the intermediary link of the father and mother, in a manner almost spontaneous and self-regulating. After the passage of some time, the child starts learning a little by hearing parents and others around say what they do, or pick up a few tips by seeing a few things around. This, then, creates in the child the ability to understand sounds heard and things seen.

Therefore, after: لَاتَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (when you knew nothing) in the verse under comment, it was said: وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ (and He made for you ears, eyes and hearts). It means: Though, human beings knew nothing about anything at the early stage of their birth, but nature had installed in their very frame of existence novel instruments to fulfill their need to learn. Out of these instruments, the first to be mentioned was 'sam', that is, the faculty of hearing which precedes perhaps for the reason that the very first knowledge, and the most of it, comes through nothing but ears. In the beginning, eyes are closed, but ears hear. Furthermore, if we were to think about it, we shall not fail to realize that the amount of information one acquires in a whole life time is mostly what has been heard with ears. Information collected visually is much less than that.



After these two, comes information which one deduces by deliberating into things heard and seen. According to the statements of the Qur'ān, this is a function of the human heart. Therefore, stated at number three is: أَفِيدَة (afidah) which is the plural of: فُؤَاد fu'ād which means the heart. Scientists identify the human brain as the center of understanding and reason. But, the statement of the Qur'ān tells us that though the brain plays a role in this process of reasoning, yet the real center of knowledge and reason is the heart.

On this occasion, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned the faculties of hearing, seeing and understanding. Speech was not mentioned because speech plays no role in the acquisition of knowledge. It is, rather, a source of the expression of knowledge. In addition to that, according to Imām Al-Qurṭubī, the word: سَمْع 'sam' (hearing) is inclusive of نُطْق nuṭq (speech) as a corollary, as experience bears out that a person who hears speaks as well. A person deprived of the power of speech remains deaf in the ears as well. Perhaps, the reason why a dumb person cannot speak lies in the person's very inability to hear any sounds which could make learning to speak through hearing possible. واللّه اعلم Wallāhu a'lam: 'And Allah knows best' is a standard appendage to conclusions where definite knowledge about a subject in flux is not available or accessible or reliable. For a believer, this serves as a safety device against the possibility of having made any false statements, which may be a sin.

In the statement: وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا (And Allah has made for you of your houses a place of comfort - 80), the word: بَیوت (buyūt) is the plural of bayt (بيت) which means a house where night could be spent. Imām Al-Qurṭubī says in his Tafsīr:

كُلُّ مَا عَلَاكَ فَاطَّلَكَ فَهُوَ سَقْفٌ وَسَّمَاءٌ وَكُلُّ مَا أَقْلَكَ فَهُوَ أَرْضٌ وَكُلُّ مَا سَرَكَ مِنْ جِهَاتِكَ الْأَرْبَعِ فَهُوَ جِدَارٌ فَإِذَا انْتَضَمَتْ وَأَتَصَلَّتْ فَهُوَ بَيْتٌ

'Whatever is above your head and provides shade for you is roof or sky, and whatever holds you atop is earth, and whatever screens you out from all four sides are walls, and when (all these components are) put together properly, that is a house.

### **The real purpose of making a house is to have peace for body and heart**

Here, by calling the human house a place of comfort and peace Allah Ta'ālā has made the logic and wisdom of making houses fully evident,

that is, its real purpose is to have comfort of the body and peace of the heart. Customarily, the avenues of human work lie outside houses. Human work owes its existence to human movement and struggle. The real purpose of one's house is to go there, when tired after moving around and doing things, and rest and enjoy peace - even though, there are times when one keeps moving around and doing things in one's own house, but such instances are usually on the lower side.

This help us realize that peace is really the peace of mind and heart, something one finds in one's home only. This also tells us that the highest qualification of human home is that it provides peace. The world of today is at the height of its building craze. Limitless expenditure is incurred on their superficial finishing. But, there are very few homes among them which would provide peace of mind and heart. In fact, the artificially imposed additions in them become the very agents which destroy comfort and peace, and even in the absence of such material extravagance, the kind of people one confronts in the house is a misfortune which sucks that peace away. When such elegant houses are compared with a modest hut, the dweller of the hut who is blessed with comfort and peace for his body and heart is certainly living in a better place.

The Qur'ān manifests the 'elan vital, the essence and the root of everything. Hence, peace was declared to be the real purpose of human home, and the greatest need indeed. Similarly, the real purpose of marital life was also determined to be peace as in: *لَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا* (so that you may enjoy peace with her - 30:21). A married life which fails to achieve this purpose remains deprived of the real benefit destined for it. Life in our day is infested with so many customs and formalities reaching the limits of absurdity in showing what you have through all sorts of artificial veneers. To compound the problem further, the outpourings of Western cultural and social norms and products have provided everything one needs to embellish personl surroundings with artificial decor - but, it has certainly made human beings become all deprived of what would be real comfort for their bodies and peace for their hearts.

The statement: *مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ* (from the hides of the cattle - 80) and the statement: *مِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا* (out of their wool and their fur and their hair - 80) prove that it is *Ḥalāl* to use everything out of the hide, wool and hair of animals. Here, even the restriction that the animal be properly

slaughtered or be a dead animal does not exist, nor is there any restriction as to their meat being Ḥalāl or Ḥarām. It is perfectly Ḥalāl to use the hides of the animals of this kind by tanning them, and as for hair and wool, the death of the animal leaves just no effect on them. That remains Ḥalāl and permissible without any specific technical treatment. This is the Madhab (creed) of the great Imām, Abū Ḥanīfah. However, the hide of swine and all parts thereof are unclean and unfit for use under all conditions.

Finally, a note about the statement: سَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمْ الْحَرَّ (shirts which protect you from heat - 81). Here, protection from heat has been identified as the purpose of a shirt - though, a shirt protects one from heat and cold both. This has been answered by Imām Al-Qurṭubī and other commentators by saying that the Holy Qur'ān has been revealed in the Arabic language, its first addressees are Arabs, therefore, it speaks by taking Arab habits and needs into account. Arabia is a hot country where the very thought of snow and winter chill is far-fetched, therefore, the statement was left with the mention of protection from heat as being sufficient. Yet another explanation for this has been given by Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thanavī in Bayān al-Qur'ān by saying that in the beginning of this Sūrah, the Qur'ān had already said: لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ (and for you, there is provision against cold in them - 16:5). Thus, it was in view of this earlier mention of beating cold and having warmth that only protection from heat has been mentioned here.

### Verses 84 - 89

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَاءُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِكَ ۖ فَالْقُوا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَالْقُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامَ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ

أَمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ ۖ  
وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ  
لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

And (remember) the Day We shall raise up a witness from every people, then the disbelievers will not be allowed (to make excuses) nor shall they be asked to repent. [84]

And when the unjust will see the punishment, it will not be lightened for them, nor will they be given respite. [85]

And when the Mushriks will see those whom they made partners with Allah, they will say: Our Lord, these are the partners we made whom we called in worship besides you. Then, they (the partners) will turn to them saying: You are indeed liars. [86]

And on that day they will tender submission to Allah and lost to them shall be all that they used to fabricate. [87]

Those who disbelieve, and put obstructions in the way of Allah, for them We shall add up punishment after punishment for the mischief they used to make. [88]

And (think of) the day We shall send to every people a witness from among them (to testify) against them, and We shall bring you (O prophet) as witness against these. And We have revealed to you the Book, an exposition of everything, and guidance, and mercy, and glad tidings for the Muslims. [89]

### Commentary

In verse 89, by saying: وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ, the Qur'ān has been credited as the exposition of everything. It means everything about the religion because the objective of Divine revelation and Prophetic mission concerns with these very things. Therefore, the very effort to cull out answers to problems pertaining to economic sciences from the Qur'ān is an exercise in error. However, the appearance of some implied hint somewhere there shall not be deemed contrary to this. Now remains the question that the Qur'ān does not carry answers to all problems of the religion itself, how then, would it be correct to say that it is 'an exposition of

everything'?

The answer is that the Qur'ān, does carry the basic principles concerning all problems, and it is in their light that the Aḥādīth of the Rasūl of Allah clarify these problems. Then, there are some details which are delegated to the principles of Ijmā' (consensus) and Al-Qiyās (analogical deduction following the norms set by the Sharī'ah of Islam). This tells us that the religious rulings deduced from the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and from Ijmā' and Qiyās are also, in a way, as stated by the Qur'ān itself.

### Verse 90

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُم لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

**Allah commands to do justice and be good, and to give relatives (their due), and forbids from shameless acts, evil deeds and transgression. He exhorts you so that you may be receptive to advice. [90]**

### Commentary

This is the most comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān where the essence of the entire range of Islamic teachings has been condensed into a few words. Therefore, from the blessed period of the most righteous elders upto this day, the practice has continued that this verse is recited at the end of the special Khuṭbah (address) of Jumu'ah and the two 'Eids ('Eid al-Fiṭr and 'Eid al-Aḍḥā). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that the most comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān appears in Sūrah An-Naḥl and it is: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ (16:90 cited above) [Ibn Kathīr]

Then, there is the case of another Ṣaḥābi, Sayyidnā Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi. He actually embraced Islam on the basis of this very verse. Imām Ibn Kathīr, quoting Ma'rifatuṣ-Ṣaḥābah, a book by Abū Ya'fā, who was known as a Ḥafīẓ of Ḥadīth (virtually a living data bank of Ḥadīth in contemporary terms), has reported with sound authority that Aktham ibn al-Saifi was the chief of his people. When he learnt about the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his claim to prophethood and his propagation of Islam, he decided to visit the Holy Prophet ﷺ personally. But, his people suggested

to him that he was their chief, the highest ranking person among them, therefore, his going there personally was not appropriate. Then, Aktham proposed the alternative that they should select two persons from the tribe who should go there, survey the situation and report back to him. These two people presented themselves before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted that they had come from Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi to find out two things. Aktham has two questions for you:

مَنْ أَنْتَ وَمَا أَنْتَ

'Who are you and what are you?'

He said: 'The answer to the first question is that I am Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah, and the answer to the second question is that I am a servant of Allah and His Rasūl (messenger)'. After that, he recited this verse of Sūrah An-Naḥl which begins with: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ (90). The two emissaries requested him to recite those sentences to them once again. He kept reciting the verse before them until the verse was committed to their memory.

The emissaries returned to Aktham and reported that by asking the first question their intention was to find out his lineage. But, he did not give much attention to this. He simply considered it sufficient to give the name of his father. Yet, when they checked on his lineage with others, they found out that he was very high in lineage and nobility. Then, they told Aktham that the Holy Prophet ﷺ also recited some words before them which they would narrate to him.

When the emissaries recited the verse under reference to Aktham ibn al-Ṣaifi, he promptly said: 'This tells us that he bids morals which are high and forbids morals which are low. Let all of you embrace his religion as soon as possible so that you stay ahead of other people, and not lag behind as camp followers.' [Ibn Kathīr]

Similarly, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn ؓ says: 'At the initial stage, I had embraced Islam because people around said so. But, Islam had not taken roots in my heart. Then, there came a day when I was present in the blessed company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All of a sudden, signs associated with the descent of revelation on him became apparent, and after some strange things had transpired, he said: "The emissary of

Allah Ta'ālā came to me and this verse was revealed upon me". Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn ؓ says that once he saw this event and heard this verse, his faith became all firm and fortified in his heart and the love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to be settled there for good'. [After reporting this event, Ibn Kathīr has said that it is supported by strong and authentic chain of transmitting authorities]

Likewise, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse before Walīd ibn Mughīrah, he went to report his impression before his people, the Quraish of Makkah, in the following words:

والله انّ له لحلاوة وانّ عليه لطاوة وانّ اصله لمورق وأعلاؤه لمثمر وما هو بقول  
بشر

By God, in it, there is a special sweetness and, above it there is a unique hallow of light, and leaves are going to sprout out from its roots and fruits are going to show up on its branches - and this can never be the speech of any human being.

### The Command To Do Three Things And Not To Do Three

Allah Ta'ālā bids three things in this verse. These are: (1) To do justice, (2) to be good, (3) to give relatives (their due). Then, He forbids three things. These are: (1) Shameful acts, (2) evil deeds, (3) transgression. The Islamic legal sense of these six words, and their limits, are being explained as follows:

Al-'Adl : العَدْل : The real and literal meaning of this word is to make equal. Pertinent to this, the equitable judgement of officials in the disputed cases of people is called Al-'Adl or justice. The statement: اَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ (and that when you judge between people, judge with fairness - 4:58) in the Holy Qur'ān carries this very sense and, in view of this, the word Al-'Adl (justice) also refers to moderation (*al-i'tidāl*) between the two extremes of excess (*al-ifrāt*) and deficiency (*at-tafrīt*). Then, very much in congruity with this sense, some Tafsīr authorities have explained Al-'Adl at this place as the equality of the outward and the inward state of a person, that is, what one says or does through the obvious organs of his body should also be compatible with what he believes in and lives by. However, the truth of the matter is that the word Al-'Adl here has been used in its general sense which is inclusive of all these forms and shades reported from different Tafsīr authorities. There is no contradiction or di-

vergence in them.

And according to Ibn al-ʿArabi, the intrinsic meaning of Al-ʿAdl is to make equal, then, different congruities go to make its sense different. For instance, one sense of Al-ʿAdl or justice is that man should do justice between his Nafs (self) and his Rabb (Lord-God). If so, it would mean that he should give preference to the right of Allah Taʿālā over the pleasure of his self and make the seeking of His pleasure far more urgent and prior than the pursuit of his own desires and obey His commands and totally abstain from what He has forbidden.

Then, there is the second kind of justice which requires that one enter into a deal of justice with his own self, that is, protect his self from all such challenges which bring physical or spiritual destruction upon him, refuse to fulfill such desires of his self which are harmful for him in the end, be content and satisfied observing patience, and avoid putting unnecessary burden on his self without valid excuse.

The third kind of justice prevails between one's own self and the rest of Allah's creation. In this case, the essential sense is that one should deal with the whole creation in a cooperative spirit wishing well, doing good and having sympathy, never betray anyone with the slightest breach of trust in any transaction whether minor or major, demand from his self justice for everyone, and see to it that no human being is hurt by anything said or done by him whether apparent or concealed.

Similarly, there is the justice done when two parties bring one of their cases for adjudication before a person, then, it is the duty of that person that he must decide the case without any tilt towards anyone and in accordance with what is the truth. Then, it is also a form of justice when one leaves out the extreme options of excess and deficiency in all matters and takes to the path of moderation. This is the sense Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Rāzī prefers when he says that the word Al-ʿAdl (justice) is inclusive of moderation in belief, moderation in deed, moderation in morals, everything. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ]

Finally, Imām Al-Qurṭubī who gives all these details to determine the sense of Al-ʿAdl also considers it good for the purpose. This also tells us that the one single word, Al-ʿAdl, in this verse encompasses in itself the adherence to all good morals and deeds and the avoidance of all bad



morals and deeds.

Al-Iḥsān : الْإِحْسَانُ : The real and literal meaning of Al-Iḥsān is to make something good. It has two kinds: (1) that one makes deeds or morals and habits become good and perfect in one's own person; (2) that one deals with the other person nicely, decently and favourably. To cover this second sense, Arabic usage takes: *إلى* (*ilā*) as the preposition after it, as it appears in a verse of the Qur'an: أَحْسِنُ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ (be good as Allah has been good to you - 28:77).

Imām Al-Qurṭubī has said that this word has been used in its general sense in the cited verse, therefore, it is inclusive of both kinds of Iḥsān. Then, the first kind of Iḥsān, that is, doing something well in its own right, is also general - for instance, to come out with acts of worship in their best possible form, to make efforts to improve upon personal deeds and morals and to seek betterment in dealings with others.

The meaning of Iḥsān given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself in the famous Ḥadīth of Jibra'īl relates to the quality of Iḥsān in acts of 'Ibādah or worship. The gist of his blessed statement is: Worship Allah as if you are seeing Allah. And if you cannot imagine Divine presence at this level, then, each person must have at least this much certitude that Allah Almighty is, after all, seeing what he or she is doing. The reason is that it is a cardinal part of Islamic faith that not the minutest molecule of this universe can remain outside the reach of the knowledge and perception of Allah Ta'ālā.

To sum up, it can be said that the second command given in this verse is that of Iḥsān. Included here is the Iḥsān of 'Ibadah (the betterment of acts of worship) as explained by the Ḥadīth. Also included here is the Iḥsān or betterment of all deeds, morals and habits, that is, seeing that they come out right, good and authentic in the form and spirit desired. And also included here is to be good to the whole creation of Allah, whether believer or infidel, human or animal.

Imām Al-Qurṭubī has said: The person in whose house his cat is not fed and taken care of and the birds in whose cage are not attended to as due, then, no matter how devoted to acts of worship he may be, he would still not be counted among the Muḥsinīn, those who are good to others.

In conclusion, the first command given in this verse is that of Al-'Adl or justice, then, that of Al-Iḥsān or being good. Some Tafsīr authorities have said that justice means that one should give the right of the other person in full and take what comes to him, neither less nor more; then, should someone hurt you, you hurt him only as much as he did, no more. And Iḥsān or being good means that you give the other person more than his real due and, as for your own right, ignore it to the limit that you willingly accept even if it turns out to be less than due. Similarly, when someone hurts you physically or verbally, then, rather than inflict an equal retaliation against that person, you better forgive him, in fact, return the evil done by him with what is good for him. Thus, the command to do justice comes in the form of what is Farḍ and Wājib (obligatory and necessary as duty) while the command to be good appears in the status of an act which is voluntary (Nafl) and is motivated by a well-meaning desire to contribute more in the way of what is good.

Give relatives (their due) : **إِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** : The third command given in this verse is to give relatives (their due). The word: **إِيتَاءِ** ('*itā'*) used in the text means to give something - with the added sense of giving as gift or presentation in good grace. The word: **الْقُرْبَىٰ** (*al-qurbā*) means relationship or kinship; and: **ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** (*dhil-qurbā*) means relatives or kin. Thus, the command: **إِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** ('*itā' dhil-qurbā*) comes to mean to give something to relatives. That which has to be given has not been spelled out here. But, there is another verse in the Qur'ān where the object does find mention: **فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ** (give the relative his due - 17:26). As obvious, the same object applies here too, that is, relatives be given their due. Included under this 'due' is serving them financially, as well as serving them physically, and visiting them when sick, and taking care of them when in need, and the giving of verbal comfort and the expression of concern and sympathy too. Though, giving relatives their due was included under the spectrum of the word: Al-Iḥsān, yet it has been mentioned separately in order to place stress on its added importance.

Given upto this point were three commands asserted positively. The other three asserted negatively, denoting prohibition and unlawfulness, are as follows:

"And forbids from shameless acts, evil deeds and transgression": **وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ** : The first word: **الْفَحْشَاءِ** (*al-fahsha'*) translated as

'shameful acts', refers to such evil word or deed the evil of which is all too open and clear and which everyone considers bad. Then, الْمُنْكَر (al-munkar) translated as 'evil deeds', denotes the word or deed the unlawfulness or impermissibility of which is agreed upon by the well-recognized authentic exponents of the Shari'ah of Islam. Therefore, no side can be regarded as 'munkar' in their Ijtihād-based differences and, as for the word: 'Al-Munkar', it includes all sins whether outward or inward, done practically or committed morally. The real meaning of the third word: الْبَغْي (al-baghy) translated as 'transgression' is to cross the limit. The sense is that of injustice and excess. At this place, though the sense of the word: Al-Munkar (evil deeds) is inclusive of both Al-Faḥshā' (shameful acts) and Al-Baghy (transgression), but Al-Faḥshā' has been picked out as a separate entry, and made to appear first as well, because of its extreme evil and abomination. And the word: Al-Baghy has been taken up separately because its fallout is contagious. It affects others. Sometimes this transgression reaches the outer limits of mutual hostility, even armed confrontation, or it could go still further and cause international disorder.

According to a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is no sin, except injustice, the retaliation against which and the punishment for which comes so quickly. From this we learn that the ultimate severe punishment for injustice due in the Hereafter has to come anyway, however, much before that happens, Allah Ta'ālā punishes the perpetrator of injustice in this mortal world as well - even though, he may fail to realize that the punishment he received was for a particular injustice committed by him and that Allah Ta'ālā has promised to help the victim of injustice.

The six commands, imperative and prohibitive, given in this verse are - if pondered upon - an elixir for the perfect prosperity of man's individual and collective life. May Allah bless us all with the ability of following them.

### Verses 91 - 96

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَفْضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا

كَأَنِّي نَفَضْتُ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ أَعْدٍ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثُ تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا  
 بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَى مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يُلْوِكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَلَيُبَيِّنَ  
 لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ مَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ  
 أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلْتَسْأَلْنِ عَمَّا  
 كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَرِلَّ قَدَمٌ  
 بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا السُّوءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ  
 عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
 هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
 بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

And fulfill the Covenant of Allah when you pledge, and do not break oaths after you swear them solemnly, while you have made Allah a witness over you. Surely, Allah knows all that you do. [91]

And do not be like the woman, who has broken her yarn into pieces after spinning it firmly, by taking your oaths as means of mischief between yourselves, merely because a group is higher (in number and wealth) than the other. In fact, Allah puts you to a test thereby and, of course, He will make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection all that you disputed about. [92]

And if Allah so willed, He would have made you all a single community, but He lets whom He wills go astray and takes whom He wills to the right path. And you will be questioned about what you used to do. [93]

And do not make your oaths a means of mischief among yourselves, lest a foot should slip after it is firmly placed, and you taste evil for your having prevented (others) from the path of Allah, and for you there be a great punishment. [94]

And do not take a paltry price against the pledge of Allah. Indeed, what is with Allah is much better for you, if but you knew. [95] What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last. And certainly, We shall give

those who observed patience their reward for the good  
they used to do. [96]

## Commentary

### Breaking Pledges is Forbidden

The word: عَهْدٌ ('*ahd*) is inclusive of all transactions, pacts and pledges the responsibility of which has been assumed verbally, whether one does or does not swear by it, and whether it relates to doing something or not doing it.

In fact, these verses are the explanation and conclusion of previous verses. The previous verses carried the command to do justice and to be good. The sense of justice there includes the fulfillment of pledges as well. [Qurṭubī]

After having given a pledge or made a contract with someone, breaking it is a major sin. But, in the event it is broken, there is no Kaffārah (expiation) fixed for this purpose. Instead, it brings the punishment of the Hereafter on the offender. According to Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that a flag shall be planted on the back of the pledge-breaker on the Day of Resurrection which will become the cause of his or her disgrace there.

Similarly, acting contrary to what one has sworn by is also a major sin. In the Hereafter, it is full of unimaginably evil consequences while in the present world too there are its particular situations in which Kaffārah (expiation) becomes necessary. [Qurṭubī]

In verse 92: اَنْ تَكُونَ اُمَّةٌ هِيَ اَرْبَىٰ مِنْ اُمَّةٍ (merely because a group is higher [in number and wealth] than the other), Muslims have been ordered that they should not break the pact they enter into with a group simply for the sake of worldly interests and gains. For example, they may come to think that the group or party with which they have entered into a pact is weak and few in numbers, or lacks financial backing, while the other group or party abounds in numbers and strength, or is wealthy. Now, if they are tempted to join the party having power and wealth in the hope of better gains from them, this breaking of the pledge given to the first party is not permissible. Rather than do something like that, one should stay by the pledge given and let all gains and losses rest with Allah Ta'ālā. However, if the group or party with which one has entered into a

pact commits or commissions acts contrary to the dictates of Islamic religious law, then, it is necessary to break that pledge - subject to the condition that they be clearly forewarned that Muslims will not be bound by that pact anymore - as stated in the verse: **فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ** (then, throw [the treaty] towards them being right forward - 8:58).

At the conclusion of the verse, the given situation has been identified as a device to test Muslims whereby Allah Ta'ālā tries them to determine if they would obey the desires of their self and break the solemn pledge, or go on to sacrifice their selfish motives in obedience to the command of Allah Ta'ālā.

### **An oath sworn to deceive someone may cause forfeiture of Faith ('Īmān)**

Verse 94 which begins with the words: **وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِيمَانَكُمْ دَحَلًا** (do not take your oaths as a means of mischief) gives yet another instruction to stay away from getting involved in what is a great sin laden with evil consequences. It means that anyone who at the very time of taking an oath harbours other ideas and intentions, is all set to act counter to the oath taken while going through the exercise of oath-taking merely to deceive the other party, then, this would be an act far more dangerous than that of breaking a common oath. As a result, the danger is that this person may end up being all deprived of the very asset of 'Īmān (faith). The sentence which follows immediately, that is: **فَقَرَلْ قَدَمُكَ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا** (lest a foot should slip after it is firmly placed - 94), means exactly this. [Qurṭubī]

### **Accepting Bribe is Sternly Forbidden as It Breaks the Covenant of Allah**

Verse 95 which begins with the words: **وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا** (And do not take a paltry price against the pledge of Allah) that is, 'do not break the Covenant of Allah for a paltry price.' Here, 'a paltry price' refers to worldly life and its gains. No matter how major they may be yet, as compared with the gains of the Hereafter, even the entire world and its entire wealth is nothing but paltry. Whoever opts for the gains of the mortal world at the cost of the far superior returns in the Hereafter has struck a deal which will bring nothing but utter loss - because, selling off a blessing which is supreme and a wealth which is everlasting in ex-

change for something fast perishing and intrinsically low is what no sensible person would ever elect to do.

Ibn 'Aṭīyyāh said: If doing something is obligatory on a person, then, it is a Covenant of Allah due against him. He is responsible for it. And in the process of fulfilling this duty, the act of charging wages or something in return, and not doing what duty calls for without being first paid off in cash or kind, is what amounts to breaking the Covenant of Allah. Similarly, if not doing something is obligatory on a person, then, should that person do it against returns received from someone, that too will constitute the breaking of the Covenant of Allah.

This tells us that all prevailing kinds of bribery are unlawful. For example, a government servant who receives a salary for what he does has virtually given a pledge to Allah that he would perform the job assigned to him against the salary he receives. Now, if he goes about asking for some sort of return from someone in order to do that job, and keeps hedging and postponing the required action until he has that return, then, this official is breaking the Covenant of Allah. Similarly, doing something for which the department has not empowered him, even doing it by accepting bribe, is also a breach of pledge. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ]

### A Comprehensive Definition of Bribe

The statement of Ibn 'Aṭīyyāh quoted above also accomodates a fairly inclusive definition of bribe (Rishwat) which, in the words of Tafsīr Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, is as follows:

اخذ الاموال على فعل ما يجب على الاخذ فعله او فعل ما يجب عليه تركه

Taking a return for not doing a job the doing of which is obligatory on a person, or taking a return for doing a job not doing which is obligatory on a person, is what bribe is. [Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, p. 533, v. 5]

That the combined blessings of the whole world are paltry has been stated in the next verse (96) through the words: وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ that is, 'what is with you (meaning worldly gains) is to end; and what is with Allah Ta'ālā (meaning the reward and punishment of the Hereafter) is to last for ever'.

## All Wordly Gains and States will Perish - Only their Outcome with Allah shall Remain

A casual look at the expression: مَا عِنْدَكُمْ (*mā 'indakum*: 'what is with you' meaning world gains) leads one to think of wealth and possessions only. My revered teacher, Maulānā Sayyid Aṣḡhar Ḥusain of Deoband, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said that the word: مَا : *mā* (what) is general lexically and there is nothing prohibiting us from taking it in a general sense, therefore, included under it are wealth and possessions of the present world as well as all states and matters that one experiences therein. These could be happiness and sorrow, pain and comfort, sickness and health, gain and loss or someone's friendship or enmity. These form part of it for all these are transitory and must perish. However, the after-effects of all these states and matters which are to bring reward or punishment on the Day of Judgement are destined to remain. So, any reckless pursuit of states and matters that must perish and to stake one's life and its energies on this altar by becoming negligent of the eternal reward and punishment is something no sane person should elect to do.

### Verse 97

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ اُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً  
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾

**Whoever, male or female, has done righteous deed, while a believer, We shall certainly make him live a good life and shall give such people their reward for the good they used to do. [97]**

### Commentary

#### What is 'good life'?

According to the majority of commentators, the expression 'good life' used here means a pure and pleasing life in the present world while some Tafsīr authorities have taken it to mean life in the Hereafter. And a closer look at the explanation given by the majority would also show that it does not mean that such a person will never encounter poverty or sickness. Instead, it means that a believer - even if he ever faces poverty or pain - has two things with him which shield him from becoming dis-



turbed. First comes his habit of remaining content with the available (*qanā'ah*), the hallmark of a simple life. This thing works in straitened circumstances as well. Secondly, there is this belief of his, the belief that he is going to receive the great and eternal blessings of the Hereafter in return for whatever poverty or pain he has suffered from. Poised counter to this is the condition of a disbeliever and sinner. If such a person faces poverty and pain, he has nothing to hold him together and give him solace and comfort. In this state, he is likely to lose his sanity, even think of committing suicide. And in case he was affluent, his greed would not let him sit peacefully. When the drive for more wealth makes him a millionaire, the dreams of becoming a billionaire would keep spoiling his peace.

As for righteous believers, says Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Allah Ta'ālā blesses them with a life full of pleasure, contentment and gracefulness right here in this world as well, something that never changes whatever the condition. That their life will be graceful while they enjoy health and extended means is all too obvious, particularly so on the ground that they just do not have the greed to keep their wealth increasing unnecessarily, an urge that keeps harassing one under all circumstances. And even if they have to face lean days or sickness of some sort, they always have a strong support to fall back on. They are perfect believers in the promises made by Allah. They have strong hopes of seeing ease after hardship and comfort after pain. These strengths never let their life become graceless. It is like the work of a farmer who has made his farm ready for crops. No matter how much pain he takes in working to see his crops grow, yet he welcomes all that for the sake of the comfort he is going to have. In a short time, he is certain, he is going to have the best of return for what he has done. A businessman or a wage earner would do the same. They would face all sorts of hardship in their job, even a little disgrace once in a while. But, they brave through everything and remain happy and hopeful. They believe that their business will bring profit and their job, a salary. The believer too believes that he is getting a return for every hardship and when comes the life of the Hereafter, his return for every hardship will come to him in the form of blessings that are great and everlasting. As for the life of the present world, it is not such a big deal as compared to that of the Hereafter. Therefore, a believer finds it easy to remain patient against worldly variations in living conditions.

Thus, these conditions never make a believer suffer from anxiety, apprehension and boredom. This is the 'good life' a believer is blessed with in cash, on the spot, right here in this world.

### Verses 98 - 100

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَكَّلُونَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. [98] He is such that he has no power over those who believe and place trust in their Lord. [99] His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him.

[100]

### Sequence of Verses

Emphasis was laid in previous verses over the fulfillment of the covenant with Allah following which stated there was the importance and desirability of acting righteously in one's life. That one neglects to follow these commandments happens because of Satanic instigations. Therefore, this verse teaches us to seek protection against Satan, the accursed - something needed in every good deed. But, it will be noticed that it has been mentioned particularly with the recitation of the Qur'an. One reason for this particularization could also be that the recitation of the Qur'an is an act so unique that the Satan himself runs away from it. As said poetically:

دیو بگریزد از آل قوم که قرآن خوانند

Satan bolts from people who recite the Qur'an!

Then, there are specified Verses and Chapters which have been tested and they produce the desired result in removing the traces of Satanic inputs particularly. That they are effective and beneficial stands proved from definite textual authorities (*nuṣuṣ*) - Bayān al-Qur'an. Despite this factor, when came the command to seek protection from the Satan in conjunction with the recitation of the Qur'an, it becomes all the more necessary with other deeds.

In addition to that, there is always the danger of Satanic instigations intruding into the recitation of the Qurʾān itself. For instance, one may fall short in observing the etiquette due during the recitation or that it remains devoid of the essential spirit of deliberation, thinking, submission and humbleness. So, for this too, it was deemed necessary that protection from Satanic instigations should be sought (Ibn Kathīr, Maḥzarī and others).

### Commentary

In the preface of his Tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr has said: Human beings have two kinds of enemies. The first ones come from their own kind, like the general run of disbelievers. The other kind is that of the Jinn who are diabolic and disobedient. Islam commands defence against the first kind of enemy through Jihād involving fighting and killing. But, for the other kind, the command is limited to the seeking of protection from Allah only. The reason is that the first kind of enemy happens to be homogeneous. Its attack comes openly, visibly. Therefore, fighting and killing in Jihād against such an enemy was made obligatory. As for the enemy of the Satanic kind, it is not visible. Its attack on humankind does not take place frontally. Therefore, as a measure of defence against such an enemy, the seeking of the protection of such a Being has been made obligatory that no one is able to see, neither the humankind, nor the Satan. Then, there is that subtle expediency in entrusting the defence against Satan with Allah. Is it not that one who stands subdued by the Satan is actually rejected and deserving of punishment in the sight of Allah? Quite contrary to this is the case of the humanoid enemy of human beings, that is, the disbelievers. If someone is subdued or killed while confronting them, he becomes a martyr (*shahīd*), and deserving of reward from Allah (*thawāb*)! Therefore, when one confronts an enemy of human beings with all his strength, it turns out to be nothing but beneficial, no matter what the circumstances - either he would prevail over the enemy and put an end to his power, or would himself embrace *shahādah* (martyrdom in the way of Allah) and deserve the best of returns with Him.

### Related Rulings (*masā'il*)

1. The reciting of: *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ* (*a'ūdhu bil-lāhi minash-shaiṭānir-rajīm*): I seek protection with Allah from Shaiṭān, the accursed) before initiating the recitation of the Qurʾān stands proved from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order that the command given in this verse is carried out.

But, not doing it occasionally also stands proved from authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *aḥādīth*. Therefore, the majority of Muslim scholars have not classed this injunction as obligatory (*wājib*). Instead, they have declared it to be Sunnah, a position on which Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī has reported a consensus (*ijmā'*) of the scholars of the Muslim community. As for Ḥadīth narratives carrying the word and deed of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whether those of reciting: *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ* (*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*) under most conditions or those of not reciting under some, all these have been mentioned exhaustively by Ibn Kathīr at the beginning of his Tafsīr.

2. Should *ta'awwudh* (تَعَوُّذُ) that is, '*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*', be recited only at the beginning of the first *raka'ah* while in Ṣalāh, or should it be done at the beginning of every *raka'ah*? Views of leading Muslim jurists differ in this matter. According to the great Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, it should be recited only in the first *raka'ah* while Imām Shāfi' رحمه الله تعالى declares its recitation at the beginning of every *raka'ah* as commendable (*mustaḥabb*). Arguments given by both have been presented in Tafsīr Maḥzarī with full elaboration. (p. 49, v. 5)

3. While reciting the Qur'ān - whether in Ṣalāh or out of it - the saying of '*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*' is a Sunnah. The rule applies to both situations equally. But, after it has been said once, one may go on reciting as much as one wishes to, for the same single *ta'awwudh* (said at the beginning) is sufficient. Yes, if one abandons the recitation in the middle, gets busy with some mundane chore and then resumes it all over again, one should re-initiate the recitation by saying '*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*' and '*bismillah*' once again at that time.

4. Saying '*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*' before reading any word or book other than the Qur'ān is not a Sunnah. There, one should recite only *bismillāh*. (Al-Durr al-Mukhtār, Shāmī)

However, the Ḥadīth teaches the saying of *ta'awwudh* during other things done and situations faced. For example, when someone gets very angry - so says the Ḥadīth - the heat of the anger goes away by saying: *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ* (*a'ūdhu bil-lāhi minash-shaiṭānir rajīm*: I seek protection with Allah from Shaiṭān, the accursed). (Ibn Kathīr)

It also appears in Ḥadīth that, before going to the toilet, saying:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَاِثِ

(Allāhumma innī a'ūdhu bika minal-khubuthi wal-khabā'ith)

O Allah, I seek protection with you from the foul and the impure

is commendable (*mustaḥabb*). (Shāmī)

### The way of Faith and Trust in Allah is the way of freedom from the power and control of the Shaiṭān

Verses 99 and 100 make it clear that Allah Ta'ālā has not given the Shaiṭān the kind of power which would disarm any human being and compel him to become helpless and take to evil. So, should one opt for not using his capability of choice and control because of sheer carelessness or some selfish motive, then, this would be his own fault. Therefore, it was said that people who have faith in Allah and who, rather than trust their will power in their states and actions, place their ultimate trust in Allah Ta'ālā for He is the One who gives us the ability to do everything good and also the One who shields us from everything evil. The Shaiṭān cannot possess and dictate such people. Of course, those who elect to befriend none but the Shaitān because of their selfish motives, particularly like things about him and go about associating others in the pristine divinity of Allah Ta'ālā, then, the Shaiṭān is all over them, in possession, in control, and would not let them go towards anything good while, in every evil, they are right in front.

The same subject has been taken up in verse 42 of Sūrah al-Hijr where Allah Ta'ālā has Himself refuted the claim of the Shaiṭān by saying: إِنَّ عِبَادِىْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ اِلَّا مَنْ اَتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغٰوِيْنَ (Surely, My servants [are such that] you have no power over them - except [over] the one who follows you from among the astray - 15:42).

### Verses 101- 105

وَ اِذَا بَدَّلْنَا اٰیَةً مَّكَانَ اٰیَةٍ ۙ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنْزِلُ قَالُوْا اِنَّمَا اَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۚ  
 بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ  
 لِيُثَبِّتَ الْدِّيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهْدٰى وَ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَ كَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ  
 اَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ ۙ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِى يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمٰی ۚ

وَهَذَا لِسَانَ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِيهِمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

And when We replace a verse with another verse - and Allah knows best what He reveals - they say, "You are but a forger." Instead, most of them do not know. [101]

Say, "This has been brought down by Rūḥ al-Qudus (the Holy Spirit - Jibrā'il) from your Lord rightly (as due), so that it makes the believers firm and becomes guidance and good news for the Muslims. [102]

And We know well that they say, "It is a man who teaches him." The language of the one they refer to is non-Arabic while this is clear Arabic language. [103]

Surely, those who do not believe in Allah's verses, Allah does not lead them to the right path and for them there is a painful punishment. [104]

Those who forge lies are but the ones who do not believe in Allah's verses, and it is they who are the liars. [105]

### Sequence of Verses

In the previous verse (98), there was an instruction to say '*a'ūdhu bil-lāh*' (I seek protection with Allah) while reciting the Qur'ān which indicates that the Shaiṭān puts scruples in the heart when one recites the Qur'an. In the verses cited above, there is a refutation of such Satanic instigations.

### Verses 106 - 109

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مِنْ أَكْرَهٍ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيْمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحْبَبُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمِعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخَسِرُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

Whoever rejects his faith in Allah after having believed in Him - not the one who is put to duress while his heart is at peace with Faith, but the one who has opened the bosom for disbelief - the wrath of Allah is upon such people and for them there is a heavy punishment. [106]

That is because they have preferred the worldly life over the Hereafter, and that Allah does not lead the disbelieving people to the right path. [107]

Those are the ones Allah has put a seal on their hearts, their ears and their eyes; and they are the neglectful. [108] Invariably, they are the losers in the Hereafter. [109]

### Commentary

From the first verse (106) comes the religious ruling about a person who has been compelled to utter a word of infidelity (*kufr*) under the threat that he would be killed if he did not do that. If he feels that, in all likelihood, the people threatening him have full capability of doing just that, then, this is a state of duress. If he were to utter some word of disbelief verbally - but, with a heart firm on Faith, a heart that shuns saying what is false and evil - then, there is no sin on him, nor will his wife become unlawful for him. (Qurṭubī, Maḥḥarī).

This verse was revealed about the noble Ṣaḥābah who were arrested by the Mushriks. Their disbelieving captors had told them that they must return to infidelity failing which they would be killed.

Those so arrested were Sayyidnā ‘Ammār ؓ and his parents, Sayyidnā Yāsir and Sayyidah Sumayyah ؓ, and Sayyidnā Ṣuḥaib, Bilāl and Khabbāb ؓ. Out of these, Sayyidnā Yāsir ؓ and his wife, Sayyidah Sumayyah رضى الله عنها totally refused to utter any word of disbelief. Sayyidnā Yāsir ؓ was killed while Sayyidah Sumayyah رضى الله عنها was tied in between two camels who were made to run which tore her apart in two separate body parts. This was how she met her *shahādah* (martyrdom in the way of Allah). And these are the same two blessed souls who were the first to meet their *shahādah* for the sake of Islām. Similarly, Sayyidnā Khabbāb ؓ totally refused to utter any word of disbelief and it was in perfect peace that he accepted the fate of being killed by the dis-

believers. Out of the remaining, Sayyidnā ‘Ammār ؓ went by making a mere verbal declaration of his disbelief in the face of such a danger to his life, but his heart was perfectly satisfied and firmly set upon his Faith. Once he was released by the enemy, he presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated this event with great pain. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him, "when you were making this statement, what was going on in your heart?" He submitted, "As for my heart, it was at peace and firmly set on my Faith." The Holy Prophet ﷺ put him at rest by telling him that he was not to face any punishment for that. It was in confirmation of this verdict by him that the present verse was revealed. (Qurṭubī, Maḥḥarī)

### The Definition of *ikrāh* or Compulsion

Literally, *Ikrāh* means using threat or violence to force a person to act against his or her will. Then, it has two degrees. In the first degree of *Ikrāh*, one is not willing by heart to do something, but is also not that denuded of choice and volition to say no. In the terminology of Muslim jurists, this is known as *إكراه غير ملجئ* (*ikrāh ghayr muljī*: state of compulsion not forced actually). Under such duress, saying any word of disbelief (*kufr*) or doing something unlawful (*ḥarām*) does not become permissible. However, there are some supplementary injunctions which do release some adverse effects even against this situation. Relevant details appear in Books of Fiqh. In the second degree of *Ikrāh*, one is just sucked out of all choice so much so that should he fail to carry out the order of the perpetrators of this coercion (*Ikrāh*), he would be killed or some of his organ is amputated. This, in the terminology of Muslim jurists, is called *Ikrāh Muljī* which means a compulsion which makes one totally choiceless and helpless. When under the state of such duress, the mere verbalization of the word of disbelief - subject to the condition that one's heart is firm and at peace with Faith - is permissible. Similarly, short of killing another human being, should one be coerced to do some other unlawful deed, it will bring no sin to commit that unlawful act.

But, the concessions given in both kinds of *Ikrāh* are subject to a condition that the coercer threatening to do what he says he will do should actually be capable of doing just that, and the coerced should have the overwhelming likelihood that should he fail to oblige him, he would go ahead and definitely do what he is threatening to do.



## Related Ruling

There are two kinds of transactions. (1) Those in which the transaction can be effected only by mutual consent and heart felt willingness of the parties, like sale, gift, etc. There is the definitive authority of the Holy Qur'an to this effect. The Holy Qur'an says, لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا: "Do not eat up the wealth of others, unless there is a trade with mutual consent" (4:29) And then it appears in Ḥadīth:

لَا يَحِلُّ مَالُ امْرِءٍ مُسْلِمٍ إِلَّا بِطِبْطِيبِ نَفْسٍ مِنْهُ

The wealth and property of a Muslim does not become lawful unless it be with a whole-hearted pleasure from the person.

If such transactions were to be arranged and executed under duress (with Ikrāh), they have no validity in the sight of the Sharī'ah of Islam. In normal practice, once the person concerned comes out of the state of Ikrāh (compulsion, duress), he will have the option to reassess the sale or gift done under duress and exercise his free will to retain or cancel it.

Then there are some transactions which depend on verbal commitment only. Here, the intention and the volition in the heart or pleasure and will are not the binding conditions of the transaction - such as, marriage, divorce, revocation of divorce, freedom of a slave etc. For such matters, it is said in Ḥadīth:

ثَلَاثُ جُذْهَنٍ جَدٌّ وَهَزْلُهُنَّ جَدُّ النِّكَاحِ وَالطَّلَاقِ وَالرَّجْعَةُ (رواه ابو داود والترمذى وحسنه)

"There are three things in which not only the serious words, but also the nonserious words are counted as serious".

It means if two individuals go through the process of Offer and Acceptance in Marriage in accordance with attending conditions, or some husband divorces his wife by pronouncing it verbally, or verbally revokes the divorce given by him earlier - whether that be in jest with no intention in the heart for marriage or divorce or revocation - still, by a mere saying of the respective words, the marriage will stand solemnized, the divorce will become effective, and the revocation will turn out right. (Maḥzarī)

According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Sha'bī, Zuhri, Nakha'ī and Qatādah, may the mercy of Allah be upon them, this very injunction applies to 'divorce under duress' (طلاق مكره : *Talāq Mukrah*). It means that such a person being under duress was though not ready to divorce will-

ingly and by heart yet, rendered helpless, he uttered the words of divorce. Now, the actualization of divorce is connected with nothing but the pronouncing of the words of divorce. The intention and will of the heart is not a condition here - as proved from the Ḥadīth cited above. Therefore, this divorce will become effective.

But, according to Imām Shāfi'ī, and Sayyidnā 'Alī and Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the 'divorce under duress' (under the state of Ikrah) will not take effect because it appears in Ḥadīth:

رُفِعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَاءُ وَالنِّسْيَانُ وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ (رواه الطبرانی عن ثوبان رضي الله عنه)

Removed away from my Ummah are mistake, forgetting and what they are compelled to under coercion. (Reported by al-Ṭabarānī from Sayyidnā Thawbān رضي الله عنه)

According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, this Ḥadīth is related to injunctions of the 'Ākhirah (Hereafter), that is, something said or done contrary to the Sharī'ah by mistake and forgetfulness or under duress will bring no sin. As for the rest of the injunctions pertaining to the mortal world as well as the incidences of doing things like that therein are to occur as felt and sensed. It goes without saying that the vestiges and rulings generated by this occurrence shall continue to bring their relevant effects. For example, someone killed someone else by mistake, then, there is no doubt that he will neither incur the sin of killing him nor face the punishment of the Hereafter, but the way the tangible effect of killing has occurred in the form of the victim's loss of life, very similarly, its subsequent Islamic legal effect will also follow: his wife will, after the period of Iddah, be able to enter a second marriage contract and the wealth and property left by him will be distributed in the form of inheritance to his legal heirs. Similary, when words to the effect of divorce, marriage or revocation were said verbally, then, their consequential Islamic legal effect will also follow. (Maḥzarī, Qurṭubī) والله سبحانه اعلم.

### Verses 110 - 113

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوا ثُمَّ جَاهَدُوا وَصَبَرُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ

نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَضَرَبَ  
 اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ  
 فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعَمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ  
 الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

Then, your Lord - for those who left their homes after being persecuted, then fought in the way of Allah and stood patient - surely your Lord is, after all that, Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [110]

The day everyone will come defending himself, and everyone will be given in full what he did. And they will not be wronged. [111]

And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror (cast over it) like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [112] And surely there came to them a messenger from among themselves, but they belied him, so the punishment seized them, while they were transgressing. [113]

### Sequence of Verses

Warnings of punishment against disbelief (*kufir*) - whether original or apostacy (*irtidād*) - appeared in previous verses. After that, in the first (106) of the initial three verses cited above, it has been pointed clearly that 'Īmān or the declaration of faith is a wealth that could work wonders for a *kāfir* (disbeliever) or *murtadd* (apostate) who - if he were to come up with an honest and true 'Īmān - all his past sins would stand forgiven.

In the second verse (107), the last day of Qiyāmah was mentioned for the reason that all this phenomena of reward and punishment has to occur after that. In the third verse (108), it was said that the real punishment of disbelief and sin will, though come after the Qiyāmah, yet there are some sins the punishment of which is faced in a certain degree with-

in the present world.

### Commentary

According to leading Tafsīr authorities, the similitude mentioned in verse 112 is general and universal. It does not relate to a particular habitation. However, there are others who connect it to what had happened in Makkah al-Mukarramah where people suffered from an acute famine for seven years so much so that they were compelled to eat animal carcass, dead dogs and filth. They were virtually gripped with the awe of Muslims. Then, the chiefs of Makkah came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ with the plea that those who had committed disbelief and disobedience against his call were all grown-up men. Women and children were innocent. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet ﷺ arranged to have food supplies for them sent from Madīnah al-Ṭaiyyibah. (Maḏharī)

And Abū Sufyān, while still in his state of *kufr*, requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ: You teach kindness to relatives and mercy and forgiveness. Here are your people standing on the brink of destruction. Please pray to Allah for the removal of this famine from us. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed for them and the famine was gone. (Qurṭubī)

As for the use of the word: لِبَاسٍ (*libās*: garment) to carry the sense of giving a taste of hunger and fear towards the later part of verse 112, it will be noted that a garment is not a thing to be tasted. But, the word 'garment' standing for '*libās*' has been used here with the force of a simile denoting something being wide-spread and all-enveloping. The suggestion being conveyed here is that fear and hunger were cast over them in a manner of a garment or dress which becomes an integral part of the body. This was how hunger and fear were released and set all over them. (Maḏharī)

### Verses 114 - 119

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ  
وَمَا أَهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ۖ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ  
رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَلٌ

وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
 الْكَذِبَ لَا يَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾  
 وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا مَّا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَهُمْ  
 وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا  
 السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ  
 بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾

So, eat the permissible and pure from what Allah has provided you with, and be grateful for the bounty of Allah, if you worship Him alone. [114]

He has but prohibited for you the carrion, the blood, the flesh of swine and what has been invoked upon with a name other than that of Allah. However, if anyone is compelled by necessity - neither desiring, nor crossing the limit (of necessity) - then, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [115]

And do not say about what your tongues describe falsely, "This is lawful and that is unlawful" so that you may forge the lie upon Allah. Surely, those who forge a lie upon Allah do not prosper. [116] (Let there be) a little enjoyment, and (then) for them there is a painful punishment. [117]

And for those who are Jews, We had prohibited that which We have already told you. And We did not wrong them but they used to wrong themselves. [118]

Then your Lord - for those who did evil through ignorance, then repented after that and corrected themselves - surely your Lord is, after all that, Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [119]

### Sequence and Explanation in Gist

Mentioned in the previous verses was that disbelievers will be punished for their ungratefulness to Allah whose blessings they had been enjoying. In the cited verses, Muslims have been instructed to stay away from ungratefulness, rather be grateful for Ḥalāl things Allah has given to them. After that, they were told how the disbelievers and polytheists

had become ungrateful by declaring what Allah had made Ḥalāl for them as Ḥarām and what Allah had called Ḥarām as Ḥalāl. Muslims were warned that they should never do that. Making things Ḥalāl and Ḥarām is the exclusive right of their Creator. Doing this on your own amounts to interference in Divine prerogatives, in fact, amounts to attributing lies to Allah Ta‘ālā. Towards the end, it was also said that even those who have committed such evil deeds through ignorance should not lose hope in the mercy of Allah Ta‘ālā. Should they repent and believe honestly and truly, Allah Ta‘ālā will forgive all sins committed by them.

## Commentary

### Nature of Prohibitions: The Correct View

The restrictive particle: *إِنَّمَا* (*innamā*: only) appearing in verse 115 seems to give the impression that things Ḥarām are no more than the four mentioned in the verse. This impression emerges more clearly in another verse: *قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِيمَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا* (Say, I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, anything prohibited... - Sūrah al-An‘ām, 6:145). It seems to be suggestive of nothing being Ḥarām other than the things mentioned in the verse while the fact is that according to clarifications of the Qur‘ān and Sunnah and by the Consensus of the Muslim Ummah, there are many more things rated as Ḥarām. The answer to this difficulty comes through deliberation into the context of these very verses which tells us that the purpose at this place is not to describe Ḥalāl and Ḥarām as they are commonly understood. Instead, the purpose is to point out to what the *mushrikīn* of the period of Jāhiliyah had done. They had made many things Ḥarām on their own although Allah Ta‘ālā had never ordered them about their unlawfulness. It amounts to saying: Out of the things you have (arbitrarily) made out as Ḥarām, only that which is really Ḥarām is being mentioned here. A comprehensive explanation of this verse along with a detailed description of these four prohibitions has appeared in the Commentary of Sūrah al-Baqarah, *Mā‘ariful-Qur‘ān*, Volume I, pages 424-438, under Verses 173-174. Those interested may see it there.

### Repentance from Sin brings Forgiveness: Is it Open or Restricted?

In the last verse (119): *ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ* (Then your Lord - for

those who did evil through ignorance ...), it will be noticed that the sense of ignorance has been conveyed by the use of the word: *جَهَالَة* (*jahālah*), not: *جَهْل* (*jahl*). As for the word: *جَهْل* (*jahl*), it is employed as an antonym of: *عِلْم* (*ilm*: knowledge) and releases the sense of a lack of knowledge or understanding while the word: *جَهَالَة* (*jahālah*) denotes acting ignorantly - even if done knowingly. This tells us that the forgiveness of sins through Taubah (repentance) is not restricted to a situation where a sin is committed with lack of understanding or volition. (Rather, a true *taubah* or repentance may forgive all sins, even though committed deliberately).

### Verses 120 - 124

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾  
 شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ ۖ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ فِي  
 الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۖ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا  
 إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِنَّمَا  
 جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۖ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ  
 الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

Surely, Ibrāhīm was an Ummah (a whole community in himself), devoted to Allah, a man of pure faith; and he was not among the Mushriks (those who associate partners with Allah) [120] while he was grateful to His bounties. He chose him and led him to the straight path. [121]

And We gave him good in this world; and in the Hereafter, he is among the righteous. [122]

Then, We revealed to you, "Follow the way of Ibrāhīm, the upright, and he was not among the Mushriks". [123]

The Sabbath was appointed only for those who differed in it. And your Lord will certainly judge between them on the Day of Resurrection in what they used to dispute.

[124]

### Sequence of Verses

Refuted in the previous verses was the root of Shirk and Kufr which

is rejection of the reality of Allah's Oneness and the rejection of the mandate given by Him to His prophet. Also refuted there were some offshoots of Kufr and Shirk in the form of legalizing the illegal and illegalizing the legal, a virtual reversal of Divinely ordained arrangements. Since the Mushriks of Makkah who were the first direct addressees of the Holy Qur'an and who, despite their infidelity and idol-worship, claimed that they were adherents of the great community of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and that what they did was all in accordance with his teachings, it was also taken up as due. The rejection of their position came on the basis of what they already believed in.

So, in the first (120) of the five verses cited above, it was said that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was the foremost universal leader of nations with the high station of a prophet and messenger of Allah. This proves that he was a great prophet and messenger. Then, by saying: وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (and he was not among the Mushriks...120) along with it, his being a torch bearer of the most perfect belief in the Oneness of Allah was confirmed.

And in the second verse (121), by saying that he was grateful to Allah and was on the straight path, a warning signal was given to his adversaries who claimed to be his followers - how could they, being as ungrateful as they were, had the cheek to call themselves his adherents and followers?

After that it was said in the third verse (122) that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm was successful in Dunyā and 'Ākhirah and then it was said in the fourth verse (123) that the prophetic mission of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ was true and that he was truly committed to the ideal of the authentic community of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. After having stated these two premises, the instruction given was: your claim cannot be correct without faith in and obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the fifth verse (124): إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ (The Sabbath was appointed only for those...) the hint given is that good things you, on your own, have made unlawful for yourself were really not unlawful in the community of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

### Commentary

The word: *umma* (امة) has a few other meanings, but the well-known



sense is that of community, nation, or group of people. At this place, this is what it means - as reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ. The sense is that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm is, in his person, a community, a nation, almost a compendium of their perfections and merits. There is another meaning of the word: *امم* (*ummah*), that of the leader of a community, someone imbibing in his person many perfections. Some commentators have taken exactly this meaning of the word at this place. And the word: *قانت* (*qānit*) in verse 120 means obedient to the command (of his Creator). Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ has distinct status in these two qualities. As for being a leader, people from all famous Faiths of the world believe in him and consider it an honour to be the followers of his community. Of course, the Jews, the Chistians and the Muslims rever him. Even the Mushriks of Arabia, despite their idol-worship, felt proud to believe in him and in (supposedly) following his way (the way of someone who was the foremost idol-breaker in human annals)! As for the signal distinction of his being '*qānit*' (obedient), it becomes crystal clear from the trials this 'friend' (*khalīl*) of Allah has gone through. Imagine the fire of Namrūd (Nimrod), the Command to go elsewhere leaving behind his family in a wilderness, and then, his being ready to sacrifice his very dear son. All these are singularities because of which Allah Ta‘ālā has honoured him with such epithets.

### **The Holy Prophet ﷺ being on the way of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ: Understanding the Chemistry of Adherence**

When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ appeared, Allah Ta‘ālā blessed him with a Shari‘ah and its Injunctions. When the Last of the Prophets ﷺ appeared, his Shari‘ah too - with the exception of some particular Injunctions - was laid out in accordance with it. Though, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is preferred as more distinguished (*afḍal*) of all blessed prophets and messengers, but at this place, there are two wise considerations in asking the preferred (*afḍal*) to follow the one not so preferred (*maḍḍūl*) in the present context. (1) Since that Shari‘ah has come into the world earlier and is already known and recognized and as the last Shari‘ah was also to be in accord with that, therefore, this similarity of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the way of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ was expressed through the word: *إتباع* (*ittibā‘*: following). (2) As said by ‘Allāmah al-Zamakhsharī (author of Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf), this command to follow too is a special tribute

out of the many honours and tributes attributed to the 'friend' of Allah, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. That it is so special has been hinted through the use of the word: ثم (*thumma*: Then - 123). The sense being conveyed is: Certainly great are all those merits and perfections of the person of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm as they are, but the most superior of all these is the fact that Allah Ta'ālā has asked his preferred-most and the dearest *rasūl* to follow his way.

### Verses 125 - 128

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ ع

Invite (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel. And argue with them in the best of manners. Surely, your Lord knows best the one who strays from His way, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path. [125]

And if you were to harm them in retaliation, harm them to the measure you were harmed. And if you opt for patience, it is definitely much better for those who are patient. [126]

And be patient. And your patience is bestowed by none but Allah. And do not grieve over them, and do not be in distress for what they devise. [127] Surely, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are good in deeds. [128]

### Sequence of Verses

In the previous verses, by attesting to the veracity of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as prophet and messenger of Allah, the purpose was to induce his people to follow what he commanded them with and thus do

their bounden duty towards their Divinely ordained *rasul*. In the verses cited above, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself is being taught how to fulfill the rights of his mission as a messenger of Allah and how to observe the related etiquette as due - the generality of which includes and covers all true believers.

## Commentary

### Da'wah and Tablīgh: Principles and Curriculum

Embedded in this verse (125) there lies a whole curriculum of Da'wah and Tablīgh, its principles and rules of etiquette, within the frame of a few words. As in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, when Haram ibn Ḥayyān's رحمه الله تعالى time of death came near, his relatives asked him for some *waṣīyyah* (order, parting advice, will). In reply, he said, "*Waṣīyyah*? That people make for *māl* (wealth, property, inheritance), which I do not have. But, I would still make a *waṣīyyah*, that of the *āyāt* of Allah, particularly that of the last verses of Sūrah an-Naḥl - and I order you to stand firm on them." The verses mentioned here are the same as appear above.

Literally, دَعْوَة : *da'wah*, means to call. The first duty of the blessed prophets is to call people towards Allah. After that, what they teach as prophets and messengers are explanations of this Da'wah. The Qur'ān mentioning a special attribute of the Holy Prophet has called him: الدَّاعِي (one who invites people towards Allah):

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

And one who invites towards Allah with His permission whilst being a lamp, lighted. (al-Aḥzāb, 33:460)

يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ

O our people, respond to the Caller of Allah (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). (al-Aḥqāf, 46:31)

Calling people towards Allah (دَعْوَة إِلَى اللَّهِ : *da'wah ilal-lah*) has been made obligatory on the Muslim Ummah following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It was said in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

And there has to be a group of people from among you who call towards the good... (3:104)

And in another verse, it was said:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ

And who is better in utterance than the one who called (people) towards Allah. (Hā Mīm as-Sajdah/Fuṣṣilat, 41:33)

While expressing the general sense, this word may take several forms, such as: *دَعْوَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ* (*da'wah ilal-lah*: Calling towards Allah), *دَعْوَةٌ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ* (*da'wah ilā al-khair*: Calling toward the good) and *دَعْوَةٌ إِلَى سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ* (*da'wah ilā sabīlillāh*: Calling towards the way of Allah). However, the outcome is the same because calling towards Allah is actually calling towards His *dīn* and the Straight Path.

The next phrase: *إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ* (*ilā sabīli rabbik*: to the way of your Lord) carries two nuances of expression. Here, by mentioning the special attribute of the Most Exalted Allah - 'Rabb' - and then by annexing it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a hint has been given that the work of Da'wah is connected with the attribute of nurture, raising, training and education. Here, it is being suggested to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the way Allah Ta'ālā has nurtured him, he too should invite people using the mores of nurture and education. It should be a Da'wah in which due consideration is given to the nature and attending circumstances of the addressee and the ultimate approach has to be such as would not weigh heavy on the recipient, rather, should be as effective as is possible. The word: *دعوة* (*da'wah*) itself imparts this sense in that the mission of a prophet is not simply limited to conveying the injunctions of Allah and making people hear them. Instead, his mission is to invite people to implement these in their lives. And it is obvious that no one inviting someone to Allah would present his submission in a manner which causes distraction and aversion or in which the addressee has been maligned or mocked at.

The expression: *بِالْحِكْمَةِ* (*bil-ḥikmah*: with wisdom) which follows immediately has been used in the Holy Qur'ān for several meanings. At this place, some Tafsīr authorities have taken: *الْحِكْمَةُ* (*al-ḥikmah*) to mean the Holy Qur'ān, some others explain it as the Qur'ān and Sunnah, still others call it the binding argument while Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī has given the following Tafsīr of '*al-ḥikmah*' with reference to al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ:

إنها الكلام الصواب الواقع من النفس اجمل موقع

It is sound speech which goes into one's heart. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

This Tafsīr assimilates all above views. The author of Rūḥ al-Bayān has also carried almost the same sense in the following words:

"Al-Ḥikmah means the insight through which one finds out the dictates of circumstances and talks as appropriate relatively, chooses such time and occasion as would not put a burden on the addressee, employs lenience where lenience is called for and firmness where firmness is in order. And where he thinks the addressee would be embarrassed by saying something frankly, there he should use hints to communicate, or employ a change of subject and approach in a way that neither embarrasses the addressee nor feeds him with the thought of sticking by his prejudice."

The next word: الْمَوْعِظَةُ (*al-maw'izah*) or: وَعْظَ (*wa'ẓ*) literally means to say something in the spirit of wishing well in a manner that would make the heart of the addressee softened and arable, all tuned to accept it. Once this is done, it will be useful to talk about the reward and benefit of such acceptance, as well as, about the punishment and ill-effects of not accepting it. (Al-Qāmūs and al-Mufradāt of Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī)

Later, by saying: الْحَسَنَةُ (*al-ḥasanah*: good), the sense conveyed is that the subject and treatment of this counsel should be such as would satisfy the heart of the addressee, removing doubts and apprehensions whereby the addressee comes to realize that you have no personal motive behind your approach and that you are addressing him only in the interest of the addressee and for his or her good.

We may stay with the word: الْمَوْعِظَةُ (*al-maw'izah*: counsel) for a while and say that it had already made it clear that this wishing well has to be in an effective manner. But, experience bears out that sometimes while wishing well for someone, the approach could become hurtful or insulting for the addressee. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī). In order that people would leave this kind of approach, the word: الْحَسَنَةُ (*al-ḥasanah*: good) was added.

The word: جَادِلْ (*jādil*: argue) in the subsequent sentence: وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي (And argue with them in the best of manners) has been derived from: مُجَادَلَةٌ (*muḥādala*). At this place, it means argumentation and debate and: بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ (And argue with them in the best of manners) means that should there be, in the process of Da'wah, the need to engage in debate or exchange of arguments, then, that discussion should also be in the best of manners. It appears in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī that good manners

require a gentle and soft approach in mutual submissions, arguments have to be such as would be easily understood by the addressee, arguments have to be supported by known premises so that they help remove the doubts of the addressee and shields him against falling into dogmatism. And there are other verses of the Qurʾān which bear witness to the fact that this approach of showing good manners in debate (*al-iḥsān fī al-mujādalah*) is not restricted to Muslims alone. About the people of the Book (Jews and Christians), the Qurʾān particularly says:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a manner which is the best. (al-ʿAnkabūt, 29:46)

And in another verse, by giving the instruction of: قُولَا لَهُ، قُولَا لَهَا (speak to him in gentle words (Ṭa-Hā, 20:44) to Sayyidnā Mūsā and Hārūn عليهما السلام, it was also stressed that this was how they have to deal even with as rebellious an infidel as the Pharaoh.

### Daʿwah: Principles and Etiquette

To sum up, three things have been mentioned in verse 125 as necessary for Daʿwah:

1. Al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom)
2. Al-Mawʿiẓah al-Ḥasanah (Good Counsel)
3. Al-Mujādalah - '*billati hiya aḥsan*' (Debate in the Best of Manners)

Some commentators have said that these things are there because of three kinds of addressees. Inviting with wisdom is for people of knowledge and understanding. Inviting with good counsel is for common people. Argument and debate are for those who nurse doubts in their hearts, or simply refuse to accept anything said to them because of hostility and obstinacy.

My mentor and master, Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī has said in his Tafsīr Bayān al-Qurʾān that it is far out to deduce from the context of the verse that the addressees of these three things are groups of three different kinds, separate from each other.

In the light of the above what seems to be obvious here is that these rules of etiquette in Daʿwah are to be used for everyone. The first thing

to do in Da'wah is to wisely assess conditions surrounding the addressee and pick out the most appropriate thing to say in those terms. Then, what has to be said will certainly be said as a well-wisher, however, this empathy has to be strengthened by such evidences and proof as would satisfy the addressee. And the subject matter and the manner of presentation has to be kept soft and affectionate so that the addressee becomes certain about whatever is being said and starts feeling that this person is saying it in his interest and for his benefit, and that the speaker's purpose is not to embarrass him or belittle his status.

However, the author of Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī has made a subtle point at this place. According to him, the arrangement of the verse shows that there are really no more than two things in Da'wah: (1) Al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom) and (2) Al-Maw'izah (Good Counsel). The third thing: Al-Mujādalah (Argument, Debate) is just not included under the Principles of Da'wah. But, it can be conceded that it does come out handy once in a while in the path of Da'wah.

The author of Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī proves his point by saying: If these three things were to be the Principles of Da'wah, the exigency of the situation required that all three should have been enumerated with the help of conjunctions as: بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة والجدال الاحسن But, the Holy Qu'ran has elected to say al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom) and al-Maw'izah (Good Counsel) with conjunctive words in one single arrangement while, for al-Mujādalah, it has chosen to have a separate sentence: جَادِلْهُمْ بِأَتْيَ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ (And argue with them in the best of manners). This tells us that argument in matters of knowledge is not a basic element or condition of the Call to Allah (*da'wah ilal-lāh*). Instead, it is an instruction concerning matters that come up in the path of Da'wah - an example of which appears in the next verse where patience has been enjoined because it is inevitable to observe patience over pains inflicted by people while in the path of Da'wah.

In short, there are two principles of Da'wah - (1) Al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom) and (2) Al-Maw'izah (Good Counsel). No Da'wah - whether to the learned and the classes or to the masses of people - should remain without these two factors. However, one has to face the kind of people who are neck-deep into doubts and superstitions and more than ready to start a debate with the Dā'ī (the man of Da'wah), it is to meet such situa-

tions that a go ahead signal to engage in the exercise of Al-Mujādalah (argument, debate) has been given. But, by imposing the restriction of: بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ (in the best of manners) along with it, it was made very clear that the Mūjādalah devoid of this condition has no place and status in the Shari'ah.

### The Prophetic Etiquette of Da'wah

Inviting people towards Allah is, in fact, the mission and station of the blessed prophets, may peace be upon them all. The rightly-guided 'Ulamā' of the Muslim community carry out this mission in their capacity of being their deputies. So, it is incumbent on them that they should learn its etiquette and methodology from them alone. A *da'wah* that does not follow those methods faithfully does not remain what *da'wah* really is. Instead, it turns into '*adāwah*' (enmity) and becomes the cause of subsequent confrontations and wars.

An instruction of the Holy Qur'ān given to Sayyidnā Mūsā and Ḥārūn عليهما السلام in Sūrah Tā-Hā illustrates the principle observed by prophets in their Call: فَقُولَا لَهُ، قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى (Speak to him in gentle words, may be he takes to the advice or fears - 20:44). This is a principle no Caller to Truth (*dā'i ila al-Ḥaqq*) should ever lose sight of. Let him always bear in mind that the Pharaoh was an infidel (*kāfir*) known for his rebellion, one whose death was to come, as in ultimate Divine knowledge, while he was still a *kāfir*. Now, when Allah Ta'ālā sends his man of the Call even to a disbelieving tyrant like the Pharaoh, He sends him with the instruction of talking to him gently. Today, the people we invite to Allah, to His Faith, they are not more astray than the Pharaoh. Then, none of us can claim to match Sayyidnā Mūsā and Ḥārūn عليهما السلام as great guides and callers to the way of Allah. So, the right that Allah did not give to the two of his prophets - that they hurl hard talk on the addressee, throw taunts at him and insult him - where in the world did we get that right from?

The Holy Qur'ān is full of the Da'wah and Tablīgh of the noble prophets عليهم السلام and the contestations of disbelievers. Nowhere in there we find that any messenger of Allah has ever responded with a single unpleasant word against those who threw taunts at them despite their being on the side of the Truth. Let us have a look at some relevant examples.



The words spoken by two prophets, Sayyidnā Nūḥ and Sayyidnā Hūd عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام in response to the confrontation and sharp accusations of their people are worth noticing. These can be seen in the seventh section of Sūrah al-A'rāf from verses 59 to 67.

Sayyidnā Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام is the great prophet known for his high determination and long blessed years in this world. For nine hundred and fifty years he devoted his life to Da'wah, Tablīgh, Reform and Enlightenment among his people. But, with the exception of a few, no one from among his people listened to him. Leave the rest, even his son and wife remained on the side of disbelievers. Had a modern day Reformer been in his place, imagine how he would have talked to such a people! Just imagine and then see what those people said in response to his Call in their interest and for their benefit. They said:

إِنَّا لَنَرُكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

"Indeed we see you in an obvious error" - al-A'rāf, 7:60.

On the other side, there is a prophet of Allah. He skips the option of chastizing his evil and contumacious people and this is what he elects to say:

يَقَوْمَ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"O my people, there is no error in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds" [telling you what is good for you] - al-A'rāf, 7:61.

The other messenger of Allah who came after him was Sayyidnā Hūd عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. His people, despite having seen the messenger's miracles, chose to remain hostile. They said, "you have yet to come up with a proof for your claim and we are not the kind of people who would abandon their objects of worship (idols) just because you say so. The fact is that you have been irreverent in respect of our idols and that is why you have gone crazy."

Having heard all this, Sayyidnā Hūd عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام responded by saying:

إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَأَشْهَدُوكُمْ إِنِّي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

"I make Allah my witness, and you witness that I have nothing to do with what you take as gods besides Him" - Hūd, 11:54.

And as in Sūrah al-A'rāf, to him his people said:

إِنَّا لَنَرُكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ

"Indeed, we see you in foolishness, and we certainly believe you to be one of the liars" - 7:66.

In response to these heart-rending words used against him by his people, the messenger of Allah, Sayyidnā Hūd, blessings and peace on him, does not even think of some sharp repartee, some derogatory counter comment, or say anything which would bring into focus their waywardness and their ugly penchant for attributing lies to Allah. He does nothing of that sort. Yet, he gives the answer and what an answer! He simply said:

يَقَوْمُ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds" - al-A'raf, 7:67.

Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام invited his people to Allah in accordance with customary practice of prophets. They were addicted to the evil practice of weighing less and measuring short. When Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام asked them to refrain from it, his people made fun of him and asked him in biting contempt:

يُشْعِبُ أَصْلَوْتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ

They said, "O Shu'aib, does your *ṣalāh* (prayer) command you that we should give up what our fathers used to worship or give up our free will in (spending) our wealth? You are provenly the man of wisdom and guidance" - Hūd, 11:87.

Here, they have said three things. They open with a taunt: This prayer that you make teaches you to do all those foolish things. Then they talk about their *māl* - wealth, property, commercial interests: This is ours. We buy. We sell. What do you have to do with our financial matters? And for that matter, how does your God come into this? All this belongs to us and we have the right of spending it as we wish. The last sentence they say is loaded with black humour and angry sarcasm - you are certainly wise, guided-right!

It seems as if the contemporary votaries of secular economy did not rise only in our time. They do have their forbears in the past whose theo-

retical assumptions were the same as is being dished out today by some Muslims carrying nothing but Muslim names. So, they would say that they were Muslims, they believed in Islam but when it comes to an economic order, they adopt socialism (or capitalism) for, as they would like to believe, this area is out of bounds for Islam.

Returning to what his people said to Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام, let us now see how the messenger of Allah responds to the sarcastic remarks made by his unjust people:

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ  
أُحَالِفَكُمْ إِلَى مَا أَنْهَكُم عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ  
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

He said, "O my people, tell me, if I am on a clear path from my Lord and He has provided me from Himself with a good provision, (should I still leave you unguided?) And I do not want to do in your absence what I prohibit for you. I want nothing but to set things right as far as I can. And what I am enabled to do is only with the help of Allah. In Him alone I have placed my trust and to Him alone I turn in humbleness" - Hūd, 11:88

Despite that Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, when sent to the Pharaoh, had fully complied with the Divine instruction of talking to him gently, the response of the Pharaoh to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام came in the following words:

قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِينَا وَلِيدًا وَلَبِثْتَ فِينَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلْتَكِ الْبِئْسَ الْفَعْلُ وَأَنْتَ  
مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

He said, "(You!) Did we not raise you among us as a child, and you stayed among us for years of your life? And you did your deed which you did, and you were of the unfidels" - ash-Shu'arā', 26:18,19.

Here, the Pharaoh has reminded Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام of two favours done to him - that he raised him as a child and that he stayed with him for a number of years while older. Then he showed his displeasure over the incident in which a Copt got killed at the hands of Sayyidnā Mūsā, though he had no intention of killing him. In his anger, he also said that he had become an infidel.

At this place, the expression: أَنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (*anta min al-kāfirīn*) could

be taken in the literal sense, that is, one who is ungrateful, which would mean: 'we did favours to you and you killed one of our men, a demonstration of ungratefulness to favours done.' Then, it could also be given a technical meaning because the Pharaoh claimed to be god. So, whoever denied his godhead turned out to be a *kāfir* (infidel).

Now, at this juncture, let us hear the answer given by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام which is a masterpiece of prophetic manners and morals of Da'wah. Here, first of all, he goes ahead and makes a clean breast of what had happened to him. He had tried to disengage a Copt who was fighting an Israelite man. The punch he had employed to do that caused his death. So, this killing was not intentional. But, it was also not prompted by some religious exigency. In fact, even under the Law of Moses, that man was not deserving of being killed. Therefore, he began by confessing first and said:

فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

"I did it then, while I was of the astray (ignorant)" - ash-Shu'arā', 26:20.

The sense is that the act had escaped him before he was blessed with the mission of a prophet and at a time when he was not aware of any Divine command about it. After that, he said:

فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

"So I fled from you when I feared you. Then my Lord bestowed wisdom on me and made me of His messengers" - 26:21.

After that, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام took up the reality of favours the Pharaoh was harping on. He told him that he was not right in doing that because this whole matter of bringing him up was the result of his own cruelty and oppression in that it was he who had a standing order in force, the order to kill Israelite children. His mother was, therefore, compelled to put him into the river until came the time when he reached his home. He said:

وَبَلَدِكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ

"And this is the favour you put on me - that you have enslaved the Children of Isra'īl! - 26:22.

After that, when the Pharaoh asked: وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ("And what is the Lord of the worlds?" - 26:23), he replied by saying: رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ("The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of whatever there is in between them" - 26:24). Thereupon, it was by way of mockery that the Pharaoh turned towards the audience and asked: ... ("Do you not hear?" - 26:25) [meaning: You hear him, don't you? Hasn't he gone out of his mind?] Thereupon, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام added:

رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

"Your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers" - 26:26

Irritated, the Pharaoh said:

إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ

"Indeed, your messenger (who claims to have been) sent to you is a mad man" - 26:27.

Even such a derogatory title given to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام did not lure him into a blow for blow response for he could have easily told the Pharaoh as to who was insane and who was sane. He just took no notice of it, in fact, went on to describe another attribute of Allah, the Lord of the worlds:

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

"Lord of the East and the West and of whatever there is in between them, if you were to comprehend" - 26:28.

This is a lengthy dialogue taking place in the court of the Pharaoh between him and Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. It covers three sections of Sūrah ash-Shu'arā' (26). Look at this dialogue of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام from the beginning to the end. No emotions are betrayed here. No reply has been given to his bad words, nor is his hard talk matched by counter hard talk. Instead of all that, there is a continuous flow of statements to the effect of Allah Ta'ālā's attributes of perfection along with the ongoing efforts of Taḥlīq.

This is a brief sample of the confrontations in which the blessed prophets have stood up against their hostile and obstinate people. We can also say that it is a practical demonstration of 'arguing with the best of manners.'

Besides argumentations, debates and intellectual confrontations when inevitable, models have been set by the blessed prophets in Da'wah and Tablīgh on a standing basis. They have established wise principles in human communications as appropriate to different addressees and different occasions with the added considerations as dictated by wisdom or beneficial expediency. In short, the way and method put in practice by the blessed prophets in order to invite people to Allah (*da'wah ilal-lāh*) and make it popular, effective and abiding as well is, in reality, the essence and spirit of Da'wah. As for its details, these are spread all over in the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Let us have a look at some of these as representative samples.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was very particular about making sure that no burden is placed on the addressee whether in Da'wah and Tablīgh or in good counsel and beneficial advice. As for the noble Ṣaḥābah, they held the Holy Prophet ﷺ very dear to their heart. About them, it could not be imagined that they would, God forbid, ever get bored with what he had to say. Yet, even for them, his customary practice was that he would not hold his teaching, counseling and advising sessions every day, rather limited it to some days of the week so that their occupation or business is not adversely affected or that it becomes some sort of burden on them.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ؓ reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, "The Holy Prophet ﷺ had his 'wa'z' sessions only on some days of the week lest we get bored - and he instructed others to do the same."

Sayyidnā Anas ؓ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

Make (things) easy and do not make (things) difficult and give (people) the good news (of mercy from Allah) and do not disappoint or alienate (them) - Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-ʿIlm.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ؓ says, 'you should become *Rabbānī*, the people of your *Rabb*, people with wisdom, learning and law.' After reporting this saying in the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, the word: رَبَّانِي (Rabbānī) has been explained as: A person who, keeping in sight the principles of Da'wah, Tablīgh, education and training, starts with simple things first. When people get used to it, then he tells them about other

imperatives which would have been difficult at the elementary stage. This person is a Divinely guided scholar (عالم ربّاني). These days religious sermons and propagation efforts produce very little effect. The main reason is that workers in this field generally do not give due consideration to the principles and etiquette necessary in this area. Lengthy lectures, uncalled for sermonizings and insisting on people to do something without first finding out the conditions faced by the addressee have become their habit.

When engaged in the mission of Invitation and Reformation, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made an extra effort to ensure that the addressee is not insulted or disgraced in any way. Therefore, when he would see someone involved with something bad or wrong, he would not address him directly. Instead, he used to beam his remarks at a public gathering, for example, he would say:

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَفْعَلُونَ كَذَا

What has happened to people that they do so?

This used to be part of a public address. Naturally, the person who was supposed to hear it did hear it, was ashamed in his heart and went about getting rid of that drawback.

It was the universal habit of noble prophets that they shielded the addressee from being embarrassed. Therefore, on occasions, they would attribute what was done by the addressee to their own selves and thus tried to set things right with their people. It appears in Sūrah Yā Sīn: مَا بَالِي لَأَعْبُدَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي (What is the matter with me that I would not worship Him who created me? - 36:22). As for this emissary of the messenger, he was already devoted to his *'ibādah* (worship) all the time as was his usual way. The purpose here was to make the addressee who was not so engaged hear the worth and value of turning to Allah in *'ibādah*. But, as we see, he has attributed the shortcoming to his own person.

And Da'wah means to call or bid someone to come close to the caller - definitely not to enumerate the person's shortcomings. Then, this act of calling can become effective only when there is some common ground between the caller and the called. For this reason, the Da'wah of the noble prophets ﷺ as in the Holy Qur'ān mostly begins with the words:

يَا قَوْمِ (yā qawmī : O my people) through which stress is placed first on the common factor of brotherly relations and then things aiming at their betterment are said. It amounts to saying - 'we are people of the same brotherhood, so let there be no hatred in between us' - and this is how they start the mission of reforming their society.

In the letter of Da'wah sent by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Hiraql, the Byzantine emperor, he began by calling the emperor: 'The Great Man of Byzantium.' This tribute of honour given to him was permissible because it contained a confession of the emperor's being great - though, for the people of Byzantine, not for him. After that, the manner in which the invitation to believe was given is being quoted below:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ

"O people of the Book, come to a word common between us and you that we worship none but Allah" (as in Sūrah Āl-Imrān, 3:64)

Here, a common factor of unity was mentioned first. It was said that the belief in the Oneness of Allah (*Tauḥīd*) was the common bond between the two of them. After that came the reminder about the error of Christians.

If we were to look into the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ carefully, we will find similar rules of conduct in every field of Da'wah and public education. Unfortunately, in our time, we suffer from lack of concern for carrying the call to faith, working for the correction and betterment of people, bidding the Fair and forbidding the Unfair. Even those who are engaged in these pursuits have, (with valid exceptions) taken mere discussions, debates, accusations, name calling, berating and disgracing the adversary to be Da'wah and Tablīgh. The truth of the matter is that all this, being contrary to the Sunnah, never turns out to be effective and beneficial - while these gentlemen continue to congratulate themselves for having done a great service to Islam. In reality, they are becoming the cause of making people scared of it.

### The Harmful Worldly and Other-Worldly Effects of Current Contestations

We know from the Tafsīr of the present verse (125) that the main objective of the Shari'ah of Islām is the Call to Allah (*da'wah ilal-lāh*)



which has two principles: (1) Al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom) and (2) Al-Maw'izah Al-Ḥasanah (Good Counsel). And if the unwelcome need of Al-Mujādalah (argument, debate, confrontation) stands imposed on some stray occasion, then, that too has been allowed with the restriction of being 'in the best of manners.' But, in reality, it is not a regular department of Da'wah. Instead, it is a via media to handle its negative aspect. The Holy Qur'ān has resolved it by placing the restriction of: بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ (in the best of manners). By doing so, it has told us that it should be in the best spirit of politeness, and with the attitude of a sympathizer and well-wisher. Argument should be formulated clearly as appropriate to the state of the addressee. Any approach which belittles or insults the addressee should be totally avoided. Similarly, for it to be the best, it is also necessary to be on guard lest it becomes harmful to the speaker himself. In other words, it should not affect his morals adversely for there is the danger of his falling into envy, malice, arrogance, love for name, fame and power. These are major inward sins. In short, the kind of discussions, debates, polemics and confrontations we see today are such that it would take a very rare person, some man of Allah, to remain safe against their harmful effects, otherwise, it is extremely difficult to find refuge from it under normal circumstances.

Imām al-Ghazālī has said: The way liquor is 'the mother of evils' (*umm-ul-khabā'ith*) in that it is a grave sin by itself and also becomes the conduit of other grave sins. Similarly, when overpowering the addressee and demonstrating one's intellectual superiority over people becomes the objective, that too becomes 'the mother of evils' for one's inward state. As a result, many spiritual crimes crop up, for example: envy, malice, arrogance, backbiting, spying on the faults of others, being pleased with their discomfort and being unhappy with their gain, haughty rejection of Truth, the attitude of not considering the position of others with justice and moderation, instead, worrying about a rebuttal, no matter how askance their interpretations from the Qur'ān and Sunnah are.

These are dangers. Even serious religious scholars are affected by them. But, the problem is compounded when the thing starts affecting their followers when the intellectual exercise could turn into a physical one in progressive proportions. *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilaihi rāji'ūn*. Imām Shāfi'ī, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said:

"Knowledge is a brotherhood of the learned. How do those who have turned knowledge into enmity could invite others to follow their religion? When their sole objective is to dominate over others, how could they be expected to practice mutual attachment, love and consideration? And for one what evil could be greater than that which drowns him in the morals of the hypocrites and deprives him of the morals of those who truly believe and fear Allah?"

Imām al-Ghazālī said that a person who devotes himself to the *'ilm* of *dīn* and the *da'wah* of *haqq* revolves between two destinies. Either he, following correct principles and avoiding fatal dangers, achieves the eternal good; or, otherwise, if he falls down from this station, he slides into eternal misfortune. That he would remain hanging in between these two states is too far out to entertain - because, knowledge which is not beneficial is nothing but punishment. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَالِمٌ لَمْ يُنْفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِعِلْمِهِ

On the day of Judgement, the person most severely punished, of all human beings, shall be an *'ālim* from whose knowledge Allah has not given him any benefit.

And in another Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth, he said:

لَا تَتَعَلَّمُوا الْعِلْمَ لِتَبَاهُوا بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَلِتَمَارُوا بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ وَلِتَصْرِفُوا بِهِ وُجُوهُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ

"Do not learn the *'ilm* (of *dīn*) to compete with the learned in pride and prestige nor to challenge the incompetent with it nor to make the faces of people turn towards you therewith. So whoever will do that, will be in the fire." (Ibn Mājah, from the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Jābir with sound chains of authority as in Takhrij al-'Irāqī 'alā al-Iḥyā')

Therefore, the standing creed (*maslak*) of authorities among Muslim jurists and the people on Truth (*haqq*) in this matter was that they never considered disputation and confrontation in intellectual issues as permissible. In the mission of inviting people to the Truth, it is enough to alert anyone considered to be in error, politely and sympathetically as a well-wisher, presenting one's submission with necessary arguments. Then, should he accept, it is better. If otherwise, let him observe silence, totally avoiding altercation and adverse criticism. Let us turn to Imām Mālik رحمه الله عليه in this matter:

كَانَ مَالِكٌ يَقُولُ، الْمِرَاءُ وَالْجِدَالُ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَذْهَبُ نُورُ الْعِلْمِ عَنْ قَلْبِ الْعَبْدِ - وَقِيلَ لَهُ: رَجُلٌ لَهُ، عِلْمٌ بِالسُّنَّةِ، فَهَلْ يُجَادِلُ عَنْهَا؟ قَالَ: لَا، وَلَكِنْ يُخْبِرُ بِالسُّنَّةِ، فَإِنْ قُبِلَ مِنْهُ وَإِلَّا سَكَتَ - (أوجز المسالك شرح موطأ ص ١٠١)

Imām Mālik said: "Altercation and confrontation in *al-ilm* (the knowledge of *dīn*) drives away the light of knowledge from the heart of a servant." Someone submitted: "There is a person. who has the knowledge of Sunnah. Can he enter into debate for the protection of Sunnah?" He said, "No. But, he should inform the addressee about the Sunnah (as it is). Then, should he accept it, good - otherwise, let him observe silence." (Awjaz al-Masālik Sharḥ al-Muwatta, v. 1, page 15)

### Ineffectiveness of Contemporary Da'wah Work

There are two reasons why the work of Da'wah (invitation) and Iṣlāḥ (reform) is not fully effective. (1) Firstly, because of the increase of corruption in our time and the abundance of Ḥarām things, hearts of people have become generally hard, and heedless of the Hereafter - and the very ability to accept truth has become weak and low. And there are some who find themselves suffering from the curse the foreboding of which was given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He had said that, by the later times, the hearts of many people will turn upside down, all reversed. The ability to know good from bad, and the distinction of permissible and impermissible will vanish from their heart.

(2) Then, negligence towards the duties of bidding the Fair and forbidding the Unfair and inviting people to the true faith has become common. Not to say much about people at large, there is not much realization of its need even among the learned and the righteous. It is assumed that correcting one's own deed is just about enough whether their children, spouse, brother, friend remain smeared with all sorts of sins. The concern for their reform and betterment is as if no responsibility of theirs - although, the definite textual statements of the Holy Qur'ān (*nuṣūṣ*) are openly declaring that the betterment of one's children, family and relatives is his responsibility: قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا (Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire... - at-Taḥrīm, 66/6). As for some people who do pay attention to this duty, they do not know the teachings of the Qur'ān and the principles and manners of prophetic Da'wah. They take it easy, go by their impulse and say anything to anybody anytime without ever thinking about it. By doing so, they

surmise, they have done their duty - although, this method of action, being contrary to the blessed practice of prophets, further alienates people from the Faith and from following its dictates.

Of particular mention is the habit of finding faults with others, mocking at them or making fun of them all in the name of open criticism. Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى said:

"When alerting someone to some mistake (the rule is:) If you talked to him privately, explained it politely, then, this is 'advice'; and if you disgraced him publicly, this is 'vice.'"

The publicizing of mutual defects has become so popular these days that negative advertising is being done as if it was some service rendered to the Faith. May Allah Ta'ālā bless all of us the ability to serve our Faith with the best of insight into its Da'wah and its modalities.

At this point ends our submission relating to Da'wah and its principles and etiquette.

After that, we can move on to explain the last part of verse 125: إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (Surely, your Lord knows best the one who strays from His way, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path). This statement has been made to comfort those who carry the Call of their Faith because one is naturally shocked when the addressee does not accept the truth presented despite that all rules of Da'wah have been observed. And there are occasions when this could produce another effect. When one sees no benefit coming out of Da'wah, he can become disappointed, even leave the work itself. Therefore, in this sentence, it was said: 'Your duty is only to invite people to the Truth in accordance with its correct principles. Beyond that, its acceptance or rejection is something you have nothing to do with, nor is that one of your responsibilities. That falls in the domain of Allah alone. He knows who will remain astray and who will stand guided. You should not worry about it. Go on doing your duty. Do not lose hope. Do not despair.' This tells us that this sentence too is really a complement of the etiquette of Da'wah.

**Causing Pain to a Man of Da'wah: Revenge is Permissible, but Patience is Better.**

The next three verses (126,127,128) carry another important instruc-

tion for those who present the message of Truth before people. It tells them about what they have to do in unusual conditions. There are occasions when they have to face people who are hard-hearted and very ignorant. No matter how softly and politely one explains things to them and no matter how much goodwill one has for them in his heart, they would, even then, go in a fit of anger, use bad language and cause pain. There are times when they would go beyond that and hurt the preacher physically or would not even mind killing. So, a remedial measure was in order.

For this purpose, by saying: **وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ** (And if you were to harm them in retaliation, harm them to the measure you were harmed. And if you opt for patience, it is definitely much better for those who are patient - 126), these noble workers in the way of Allah were given the legal right that it was permissible for them to retaliate against injustice done to them. But, this was to be subject to the condition that retaliation should not exceed the measure of injustice done. In other words, assess the injustice inflicted on you, retaliate only to that measure and ensure that no excess occurs.

And at the end of the verse, given there is the advice: Though, you do have the right to retaliate, but be patient and do not retaliate. It is better.

### **The Background in which this Verse was Revealed and How it was Implemented by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah**

According to the majority of commentators, this verse is Madani. It was revealed in relation to the *shahādah* of seventy *ṣaḥābah* and about the event in which Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ was killed and his body was subjected to post-killing mutilations (*muthlah*). The narration in Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī is in accordance with it. Dārquṭnī has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ as follows:

"In the battle of Uḥud when the Mushriks marched back, the dead bodies of seventy leading *ṣaḥābah* were found. Also included there was Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ, the revered uncle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Since the Mushriks were particularly angry with him, therefore, once he was killed by them, they took out their anger on his dead body. His nose, ears and other

parts of the body were cut and the abdomen was slit open. The very sight of it shocked the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he said that, to avenge Hamzah, he would have seventy men from the Mushriks subjected to a '*muthlah*' similar to what they have done to Hamzah. It was in the background of this event that these three verses were revealed (126,127,128)". (Tafsīr Qurṭubī)

It appears in some narrations that these cruel people had meted out the same treatment of '*muthlah*' (mutilation) in the case of other *ṣaḥābah* as well. (As reported by al-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, and Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Ḥibbān in their *Ṣaḥīḥs* from Sayyidnā Ubaiyy ibn Ka'b ؓ)

In this matter, being extremely grieved, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had declared his determination to subject seventy Mushriks in retaliation for his *ṣaḥābah* irrespective of their exact number, and this was not in accord with the principle of justice and equity Allah Ta'ālā intended to stand established in this world through him. Therefore, two things were done. (1) He was alerted and told that the right of retaliation was there but it had to match the measure of injustice done. Retaliating against seventy for a few, irrespective of their number, is not right. (2) Then, he was to be the model of morals at their best. Therefore, given to him was the good counsel: Though, you are allowed to retaliate evenly but, should you set aside this option and be patient and generous to the unjust, that would be much better.

Thereupon, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Now, patient we shall be. We shall not take any revenge from anyone" - and he paid out a *kaffārah* (expiation) for his oath. (Maḥzarī from al-Baghawī) When, on the eve of the Conquest of Makkah, having all those Mushriks of Makkah under his control, it was certainly the time to do what he had declared on the battlefield of Uḥud that he would do. But, it was precisely at the time of the revelation of the cited verses that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had forsaken his earlier intention and had, instead, decided to observe patience. Therefore, at the time of the Conquest of Makkah, the course of patience was taken in accordance with the imperative of these verses. Perhaps, it is on this basis that it has been mentioned in some narration that these verses were revealed at the time of the Conquest of Makkah. And it is also not too far out to believe that the revelation of these verses was repeated, that is, initially they were revealed at the battle of 'Uḥud and

then, when came the Conquest of Makkah, they were revealed again. (as narrated by al-Mazḥarī from Ibn al-Ḥaṣṣār)

### RULING:

This verse has told us about the Law of Even Retaliation when avenging. Therefore, Muslim jurists say that in the event a person kills someone, the killed will be avenged by killing the killer. One who inflicts injury will have an even injury inflicted on him. Against one who cuts off someone's hand and feet, and then kills him, the guardian of the killed will be given the right that he too should first cut off the killer's hands and feet and then kill him.

Yes, if someone kills someone else by hitting him with a rock, or kills him by injuring him with arrows, then, it is not possible to determine the correct measure of the way of killing, that is, how many strikes did it take to make this killing take place, and how much pain has been inflicted on the person killed. In this matter, there is no measure of determining real equalization. Therefore, he will have to be killed invariably with a sword. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ)

### RULING:

Though the verse has been revealed in relation to physical pain and loss, but its words are general which includes the inflicting of financial loss. Therefore, Muslim jurists have said that a person who usurps *māl* (money, property etc.) belonging to another person, then, this other person has the right to forcibly take away from him his *māl* in accordance with his right, or take it by stealth on condition that the *māl* taken is from the genus of his right, for example, if cash has been taken, then, he can take, in lieu of it, the same amount of cash from him, by usurpation or theft. If things usurped are like grains, corn or cloth, then, similar grains, corn or cloth can be taken back. But, one cannot take another kind in lieu of the kind taken from him, for example, one cannot forcibly take cloth or some other article of use in lieu of cash. However, some *fiqhahā* (Muslim jurists) have permitted it unconditionally - whether it be from the entitled kind or from some other. Some details of these rules have been covered by al-Qurṭubī in his Tafsīr while more comprehensive details appear in books of Fiqh.

Mentioned in verse 126: وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ (And if you were to harm...) was the

general law in which avenging harm done with even harm was declared to be permissible for all Muslims, but taking the option of patience was recommended as definitely much better. And in the next verse (127), the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been addressed in a special manner and prompted to be patient because, in view of his great dignity and high station, the later response was certainly more appropriate and becoming for him as compared with others. Therefore, it was said: **وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ** (And be patient. And your patience is bestowed by none but Allah). It means: 'As for you, you just do not even contemplate a revenge. Take to Ṣabr (patience) as your only option.' And then, he was also told that his Ṣabr will come with the help of Allah alone, that is, observing Ṣabr will be made easy for him.

After that, once again in the last verse (128), a universal formula of having the help of Allah Ta'ālā by one's side was announced. It is:

**إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ**

Surely, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are good in deeds.

The essence of this formula is that the help of Allah Ta'ālā is with people who have two virtues: Taqwā and Iḥsān. The essence of Taqwā is acting righteously or being good in deed while the sense of Iḥsān at this place is to be good to those created by Allah Ta'ālā, that is, those who are duty-bound to do righteous deeds and are particular in dealing with others nicely - Allah Ta'ālā is with them. And it is obvious, if someone is blessed with the 'company' (help) of Allah Ta'ālā, who can touch him!

***Alḥamdulillāh***

**The Tafsīr of Sūrah Al-Naḥl was completed today,  
Shabān 25, 1389 Hijrah**

**وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ أَوَّلًا وَآخِرًا وَظَاهِرًا وَبَاطِنًا**